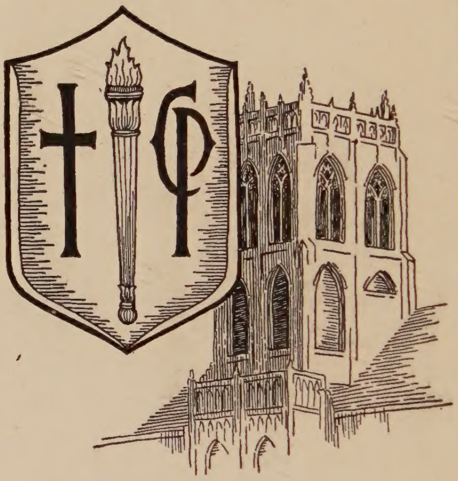
Edgar A. Poe



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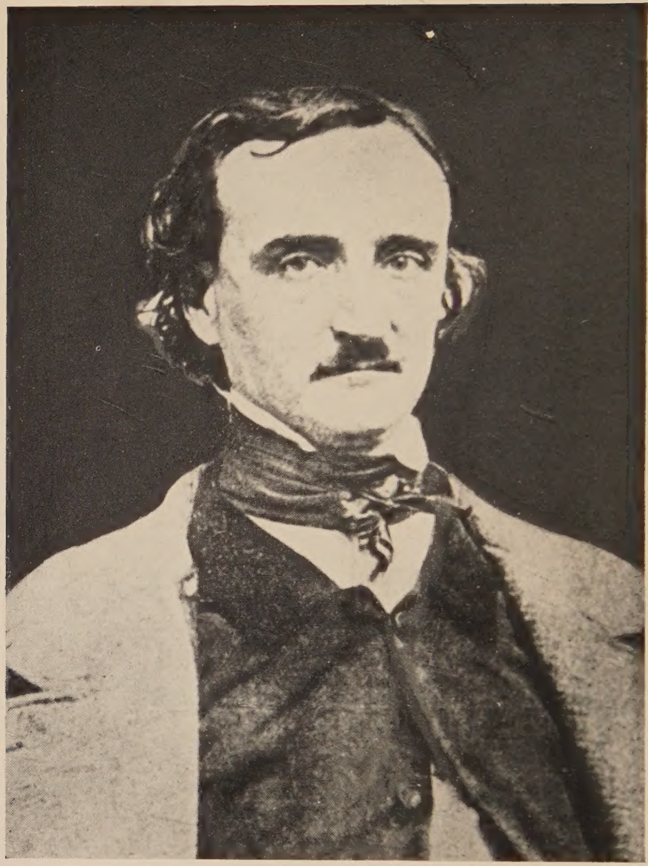

The Poet of the Latter Years

Edgar Allan Poe about the Autumn of 1848

From a photograph of the "Whitman" daguerreotype

College of the Pacific
Stockton, Calif.

Israfel

The Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe

By
Hervey Allen

In Two Volumes
Volume II

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1927

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Israfel

The Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe

Volume II

for the terrible agony which I have so lately endured — an agony known only to my God and to myself — seems to have passed my soul through fire and purged it from all that is weak. Henceforward I am strong:— thus those who love me shall see — as well as those who have so relentlessly endeavoured to ruin me.

Israfel

CHAPTER XVIII

Carmine Street

THE journey from Richmond to New York occupied several weeks. Poe was accompanied by his little family through Baltimore and Philadelphia, where, in both cities, various relatives, friends, and literary acquaintances were called upon. In Baltimore there can be little doubt that Poe conferred with Kennedy, who was thoroughly acquainted with the reasons for the move. The severance of the connection with Mr. White of the *Messenger* was a serious matter, in point of salary and influence. There must have been personal complications between the older man and his brilliant young assistant which induced Mr. White to part with Poe more readily than might otherwise have been the case. From a purely business standpoint, there was every reason why Mr. White should desire him to remain. The "other reasons" were afterward referred to vaguely by both Mr. Kennedy and Poe himself. Kennedy says that "He (Poe) was irregular, eccentric, and querulous, and soon gave up his place," and this statement is largely borne out by Poe himself some years later:

> For a brief period while I resided in Richmond and edited the *Messenger,* I certainly did give way, at long intervals, to the temptation held out on all sides by the spirit of Southern conviviality. My sensitive temperament could not stand an excitement which was an everyday matter to my companions. In short, it sometimes happened that I was completely intoxicated. For some days after each excess I was invariably confined to bed.[496]

The last glimpse that we have of Poe in Richmond shows him thus "confined to bed." Kennedy undoubtedly heard about such occasions from White later on. We can be sure that Poe himself, in talking the move over with Kennedy and others, would enlarge on the prospects of the wider field offered in the North, and on the pet project of the great national magazine. Mrs. Clemm and Virginia must have seen the Baltimore relatives, with whom, since Virginia's marriage with the rising young editor, they would now be on a more satisfactory basis. From Baltimore, the journey was continued to Philadelphia after a brief sojourn.

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[496] See the *Baltimore American* for 1881 — Poe to Dr. Snodgrass, April 1, 1841.

There were considerable inducements for Poe to remain in the Quaker City, where, indeed, we find him two years later. He already had acquaintances among publishers and editors there, and Philadelphia was at that time the great publishing center. These, however, were not sufficient to detain him. He was then, through correspondence from Richmond, in touch with Dr. Francis Lister Hawks, a North Carolinian, at that time rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and editor of the *New York Review,* to which he had already asked Poe to contribute. It is quite possible that Poe hoped to be able to occupy on that magazine much the same position he had held with Mr. White on the *Messenger,* and, with the aid of his friends, Professor Charles Anthon, and John K. Paulding,[497] and others to build up for himself rapidly a national reputation in the field of literature and journalism. In this hope, he was soon to be disappointed.

Poe, Mrs. Clemm, and Virginia arrived in New York about the end of February, 1837. Passers-by in the street must have turned to notice the three, evidently Southerners by their clothes. The distinguished air of the Byronic-looking man, the modest but appealing beauty of the young girl, and Mrs. Clemm's matronally expansiveness, as they went about looking for lodgings, attracted attention.

To Poe and his family, New York was an utterly new experience. There were no old acquaintances to stop them in the streets for a village chat, no friends or kin, as in Richmond and Baltimore. They were uncannily alone with no one to whom to turn. What little money they had saved for the move, must have been nearly exhausted. Poe had resigned from the *Messenger* on January 3, 1837, and it was now more than six weeks since the last payment by Mr. White.[498] In the meantime installments of *Arthur Gordon Pym* had been appearing in the *Messenger,* and there may have been some return due from that and other items Poe was to send to Richmond. The connection there was by no means severed and relatives were still friendly. But, at best, the resources of the three were small. What goods, if any, Mrs. Clemm brought to New York must remain unknown.

---

[497] Considerable correspondence with Hawks, Anthon, Paulding, and others, had been carried on by Poe from Richmond in 1836.

The Poes first took up residence in Manhattan in a rather dilapidated old brick building at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Waverley Place where they shared a floor with a Scotchman by the name of William Gowans, who was then, and for many years later, a well-known bookseller about New York.[499] At that time he conducted business at 169 Broadway in quarters that were known as the "Long Room." Mr. Gowans soon became a firm friend of Poe and his family, and later on followed Mrs. Clemm as one of her boarders when she moved elsewhere. He, more than anyone else, seems to have afforded Poe an important point of literary contact. Poe was much in his bookstore browsing among the volumes, and the early experiences of the young poet in Scotland, plus a knowledge of the Scotch temperament which he possessed from the long association with the clans in Richmond, now stood him in good stead. A warm bookstore and the personalities it attracted were not to be despised.

Literary progress, however, was unexpectedly difficult and disappointingly slow. There were several contributory causes. Poe had arrived in New York during the height of the financial panic of 1837. Since the latter part of 1835, the country had been experiencing the painful results of Jackson's fast and loose fiscal policy, and the mercurial phenomena of the tariff under the alternate heat and cold of sectional attacks. The dying convulsions of the Bank of the United States left the nation at the mercy of petty financiers and the mad fluctuations of credit expansion due to western land speculation made possible by the "wild cat" paper issues of state banks. An added impetus was given to the western boom by the distribution of funds from the federal treasury to the several states, and from them to local banks.[500] Consequent easy credit permitted immense sums to be borrowed and invested in worthless public lands purchased with equally worthless "wild cat" money. The federal treasury then suddenly required that payments be made in specie, and the bubble burst. Thousands of people were ruined and the failure of long-established firms became the chief item of news. April 6, 1837, was long remembered in New York as a day of terror and gloom. Flour and other necessities rose to preposterous heights. The rich trembled and the poor starved.

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[498] Thos. W. White to Poe in Richmond, January 17, 1837. " . . . You are certainly as well aware as I am, that the last $20 I advanced to you was in consideration of what you were to write for me by the piece. I also made you a promise on Saturday that I would do something for you today . . . and though it is entirely out of my power to send you up anything this morning, yet I will do something more sure, before night or early tomorrow if I have to borrow it from my friends. T. W. W." — Poe was evidently gathering funds for the move at that time.

[499] William Gowans (1803–1870). In 1842, Mr. Gowans removed his business to 204 Broadway, and later in 1846, to 63 Liberty Street. At both of these places Poe was a visitor to the Scotch bookseller who remained his friend to the last.

A natural repercussion of this state of affairs was the suspension of numerous magazines and newspapers, and the reluctance of publishers to take risks on any but the best known English authors. The *New York Review*, which Poe had so much counted on, suspended until October, 1837. It was all but impossible to get cash for articles or stories of any kind. Poe haunted the sanctums of various editors. His work on the *Messenger* was

---

[500] Under the Act of Congress of June 23, 1836, relating to the distribution of the surplus federal revenue, the money in the federal treasury on January 1, 1837, with the exception of $5,000,000, was to be deposited with the several states in proportion to their representation in Congress. The western land boom was thus accelerated by three successive installments of $28,000,000 in all, paid to the states and never returned. Most of this was wastefully squandered. A fourth installment on account of the crisis of 1837 was postponed and never paid. It is safe to say that, had John Marshall lived, this policy could not have been carried out. His death had permitted Jackson to appoint Roger B. Taney as Chief Justice, and four other Supreme Court judges were also appointed by Jackson. The policy of the Court now changed towards upholding states rights and state banking laws. See Brisco *vs.* the Bank of Kentucky on the question of the issue of bills on state credit conflicting with Craig *vs.* the State of Missouri, an earlier decision.

Poe's Residence at 13½ Carmine Street,
New York City, in 1837

From a sketch

so well known as to get him a courteous reception, but the interviews all ended in an exchange of amenities and no promise of work. Poe's attacks on various contemporaries, especially Leslie, were now quietly remembered against him; Paulding was preparing to leave New York for Washington; and Anthon, although he remained cordial, was, at best, only a minor prop. The sledding was undoubtedly hard and might have ended in a smash had it not been for the maintaining strength of Mrs. Clemm, who, despite the high cost of living, now once more undertook to provide food and shelter by the expedient of taking in boarders. Sometime during the Spring of 1837[501] the family moved to an old frame house at 113½ Carmine Street, situated near St. John's Church on the west side of the street above Varrick. The house was a dingy structure with a high-pitched roof topped by a single brick chimney. There were seven shuttered windows that stared uncompromisingly at the front, and a flat Georgian doorway at one end, approached by a front stoop with wrought-iron railings. The rooms were more than ample for the little family circle to which Mrs. Clemm perforce added two or three boarders. William Gowans now accompanied the Poes from Sixth Avenue to the new residence. He boarded with them for a long time and has left us an intimate picture of his friends at this period:

> For eight months or more one house contained us, as one table fed! During that time I saw much of him (Poe), and had an opportunity of conversing with him often, and I must say, that I never saw him the least affected by liquor, nor even descend to any known vice, while he was one of the most courteous, gentlemanly, and intelligent companions I have met with during my journeyings and haltings through divers divisions of the globe; besides, he had an extra inducement to be a good man as well as a good husband, for he had a wife of matchless beauty and loveliness; her eye could match that of any *houri,* and her face defy the genius of a Canova to imitate; a temper and disposition of surpassing sweetness; besides, she seemed as much devoted to him as a young mother is to her first-born. . . . Poe had a remarkably pleasing and prepossessing countenance, which the ladies would call decidedly handsome.

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[501] Poe wrote to Anthon from Carmine Street on May 27, 1837.

Mr. Gowans has been called "the wealthy and eccentric bibliopolist" who lived with the Poes, so some allowance must be made for the contemporary exuberance of his style. Undoubtedly, though, the family circle was pleasing and Virginia unusual. The description of her "houri eyes" brings up the liquid and glittering glances of one already afflicted with tuberculosis. Evidently she was more womanly and mature by now, and very fond of Poe. There still remains the tradition of the girl calling to her husband from the upstairs windows of the Carmine Street house, and of their walks together at twilight among the tombs in St. John's graveyard near-by.

Certainly, Mr. Gowans was a good friend. On March 30, 1837, the booksellers of New York gave a dinner at the *City Hotel* to which various literary figures and some well-known artists were invited. Among them were Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, John K. Paulding, Fitz-Greene Halleck, and Chancellor Kent; the artists were Henry Inman and Trumbull. Gowans invited Poe. The affair was rather a brilliant one and marked the first appearance of the young Southern critic and poet among the Knickerbockers. No doubt he took care to improve the opportunities of the occasion.[502]

The only other record of Poe about this time, aside from his personal correspondence with Professor Anthon and others, shows that during the Winter of 1837, which was a peculiarly severe one, Poe called at the Northern Dispensary, then located at Waverley Place and Christopher Streets, to obtain medicine for a severe cold. This was probably when on his way home to lodgings at Sixth Avenue and Waverley Place. An interesting fact about this isolated record is that Dr. Valentine Mott and Mrs. Shew were both on duty at the Northern Dispensary in 1837, and that Poe may then have met, for the first time, the two persons with whom he was to be closely associated some years later.

---

[502] This dinner, in a certain way, marked the end of the ascendancy of the "Knickerbocker Writers." The newer *literati* and the stars of the new journalism were about to appear. Lowell, Longfellow and others were just on the horizon. The men at the dinner were members of a literary generation that preceded Poe in reputation.

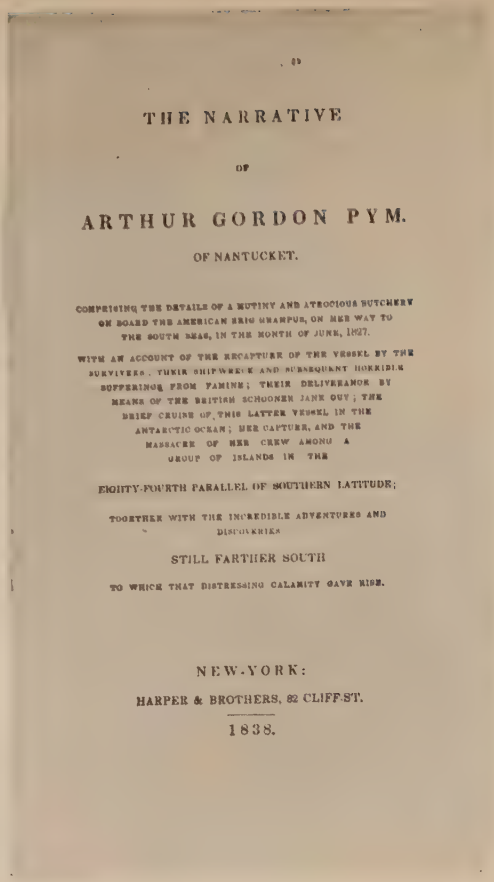
From an artistic standpoint, the young critic's release from the *Southern Literary Messenger* was fortunate. As usual, when all his time and energy was not consumed by journalism and correspondence, his creative capacity came to the fore. Poe found almost no work in New York and so turned his attention again to his stories.

The year 1837–38 marks the beginning of a second creative period; the first having come to an end two years before in Baltimore. At Carmine Street he finished *Arthur Gordon Pym* and probably composed the first draft of *Siope or Silence — A Fable,* taken all in all, as a pure work of art, his most majestic contribution to prose. Here, more than ever, he now began to realize the truth of the lines he had written seven years before in *Al Aaraaf:*

> Ours is a world of words: Quiet we call
> *Silence* — which is the merest word of all.

Siope was not published until 1839 in the *Baltimore Book,* edited by W. H. Carpenter and T. S. Arthur, Poe's old friend of the *Baltimore Saturday Visitor,* but it bears the marks of having been under way for some time before the move to Philadelphia. In June, 1837, the *American Monthly Magazine* published a tale by Poe called *Von Jung, The Mystic,* that belongs to his stories of the grotesque. It, and *Siope,* mark the continuation of his interest in the psychological and the morbidly mystical. *Siope* was presented, " in the manner of the psychological autobiographists." There is a trace of Coleridgean and German metaphysics in its manner, and a morbid " spiritualism " in both the new stories which suited the trend of the times. Transcendentalism and spiritualism were already in the air. To these Poe added his own gruesome touch.

About the young dreamer who, perforce, whiled away most of his idle time on his manuscripts at 113½ Carmine Street in the Summer of 1837, there was certainly something morbid. It was true that since the publication of the *Gothic Romances* the public's thirst for horror had always been acute. Such tales as *Frankenstein* and the like, and some of the German offerings, although they contained spinal thrills, were, when all is considered, at best simply shivers *à la mode,* and at worst purely literary. Their wax-work characters never came to life, and their corpses were only conveniently dead. But in the stories which Poe had now begun to write, the atmosphere was, in reality, charged. Both his physical and psychic horrors seemed to be the transcripts of actual suffering, terror and torment. The breeze which blew through his pages carried the awful reek of charnels. His fears were grisly, and his corpses seethed. It was a new and a genuine note. No one, not even Coleridge, had so successfully exploited the psychology of fear. Coleridge always left off where beauty refused to follow; with Poe in the realm of prose, there were no confines to horror whatsoever, and he was artistically successful in overstepping the former frontiers. Only some of the drawings of Leonardo da Vinci approach the delineation of the emotions and the details which he describes. With Leonardo the sketches were records made with an almost divine curiosity; they were to him simply part of the data of life, which had a horrible side. With Poe it was different. He seemed at times to be almost in love with the fearsome, and to have taken a strange pleasure in its delineation. The very fact that he was so successful in portraying it, implies a satisfaction in imagining the causes of the emotion of fear, which only a morbid cast in his character could account for. Poe was not generally Sadistic, but he was at times curiously close to the edge of the gulf into which the genial Marquis so notably plunged. After a day spent in piling up horrors and cannibal feastings in the chapters of *A. Gordon Pym,* one can easily imagine him going for a walk with the pallid Virginia amid the graves of old St. John's. There was, to him, an inevitable attraction in such places. His mind must have traveled back frequently to Shockoe Cemetery, or to the ancient epitaphs copied over and over upon the slates of the school boy at Irvine. There, on the graves of the Allan relatives, a carven ship bellied its stone sails to an eternal breeze from the realms of nowhere. In such spiritual monsoons, while he sensed the odor of corpses and asphodels, he widened his sensitive nostrils. The emblem of his time, whose sentiments were lugubrious, was a weeping willow tree. To his own and other generations it was left to him to whisper the hair



THE NARRATIVE

OF

ARTHUR GORDON PYM.

OF NANTUCKET.

COMPRISING THE DETAILS OF A MUTINY AND ATROCIOUS BUTCHERY
ON BOARD THE AMERICAN BRIG GRAMPUS, ON HER WAY TO
THE SOUTH SEAS, IN THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1827.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE RECAPTURE OF THE VESSEL BY THE
SURVIVERS; THEIR SHIPWRECK AND SUBSEQUENT HORRIBLE
SUFFERINGS FROM FAMINE; THEIR DELIVERANCE BY
MEANS OF THE BRITISH SCHOONER JANE GUY; THE
BRIEF CRUISE OF THIS LATTER VESSEL IN THE
ANTARCTIC OCEAN; HER CAPTURE, AND THE
MASSACRE OF HER CREW AMONG A
GROUP OF ISLANDS IN THE

EIGHTY-FOURTH PARALLEL OF SOUTHERN LATITUDE;

TOGETHER WITH THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES AND
DISCOVERIES

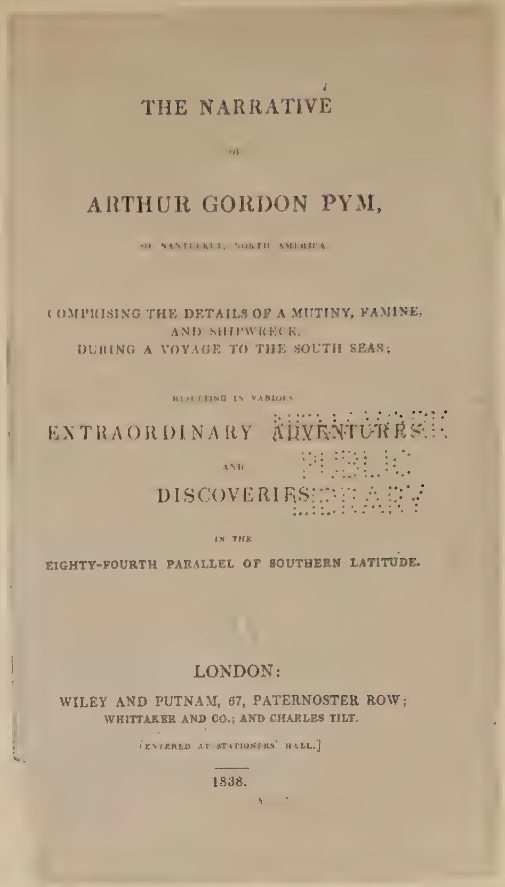
STILL FARTHER SOUTH

TO WHICH THAT DISTRESSING CALAMITY GAVE RISE.

NEW-YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, 82 CLIFF-ST.

1838.

Title Page to *The Narrative of*
Arthur Gordon Pym,
New York, 1838
Edgar Allan Poe's fourth published volume



THE NARRATIVE

OF

ARTHUR GORDON PYM,

OF NANTUCKET, NORTH AMERICA

COMPRISING THE DETAILS OF A MUTINY, FAMINE,
AND SHIPWRECK,
DURING A VOYAGE TO THE SOUTH SEAS;

RESULTING IN VARIOUS

EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES

AND

DISCOVERIES

IN THE

EIGHTY-FOURTH PARALLEL OF SOUTHERN LATITUDE.

PUBLIC LIBRARY

LONDON:
WILEY AND PUTNAM, 67, PATERNOSTER ROW;
WHITTAKER AND CO.; AND CHARLES TILT.

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

1838.

Title Page to *The Narrative of*
Arthur Gordon Pym,
London, 1838
English edition

lifting secrets *underneath* the roots. Here he was dealing, as most great artists do, with an eternal theme.

Amid Poe's various orchestral fugues and lyric songs composed upon the theme of fear, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* may be regarded as a somewhat fumbling prelude to the masterpieces which were to follow. Both Captain Marryat and Cooper had set the pace for sea stories. The public at that time was greatly interested in an expedition, under government auspices, that was then fitting out for the Antarctic, chiefly fathered by one J. N. Reynolds, with whom Poe was probably personally acquainted.[503] This was the sea of mystery of the *Ancient Mariner,* and Poe was strangely fascinated by what might lie beyond its wall of ice. He was also well acquainted with Morell's *Narrative of Four Voyages to the South Sea and the Pacific,* and with *The Mutiny of the Bounty,* lately issued by Harpers, which may have raised his hopes of being able to sell to them his own story along somewhat the same lines. Irving's *Astoria* was also familiar to Poe, and he was reviewing Stephens' *Travels in Arabia Petraea.* These, together with his own avidity for horrors, amply satisfied by reading which reeked with blood-curdling murders, mutiny, and shipwreck, constituted his sources for his fourth book and first volume of prose that was announced in May and issued by Harper and Brothers in July, 1838. It was described by the publisher as follows:

> *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, of Nantucket;* comprising the Details of a Mutiny and Atrocious Butchery on board the American Brig Grampus, on her Way to the South Seas — with an Account of the Recapture of the Vessel by the Survivors; their Shipwreck, and subsequent Horrible Sufferings from Famine; their Deliverance by means of the British Schooner Jane Gray; the brief Cruise of this latter Vessel in the Antarctic Ocean, her Capture, and the Massacre of her Crew among a Group of Islands in the 84th Parallel of Southern Latitude; together with the incredible Adventures and Discoveries still further

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[503] Although Poe's association with J. N. Reynolds is obscure, the personality of the man and the episodes which he related to Poe must have made an undying impression, for, sixteen years later, Poe cried out to him continually during the night he was dying. This tends to strengthen the idea that the material and associations of *A. Gordon Pym* go much deeper in Poe's nature than has hitherto been suggested. See the latter part of Chapter XXVII.

South, to which that distressing Calamity gave rise. 12 mo., pp. 198. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1838.

In this story, the author is at his best at the first and last of the narrative. The scene is supposed to open in Nantucket, but, as in reality Poe knew little about the locality which Melville so vividly presents in *Moby Dick,* he gives us some autobiographical details from his early life in Richmond.[504] The yacht which the two friends own, at the commencement of the story, goes back to the boat in which Poe and Ebenezer Burling early adventured together upon the James. Even the name of an early Richmond schoolmaster, Ricketts, is recalled, together with some reference to school days " on the hill " as part of Richmond was called in Poe's day. The final escape of the two friends on shipboard is an imaginative rendering of Poe's flight with Burling from Richmond in March, 1827. " Pym's " testy old grandfather with the umbrella is too close a portrait of John Allan to be mistaken. The main and central part of the story is largely a compilation of the mutinies, murders, and the sufferings of shipwrecked mariners taken sometimes almost *verbatim* from the literary sources mentioned. The curious emphasis upon cannibalism is perhaps psychic. Towards the last of the story, as the hero moves into the Antarctic realms of mystery, the author's better imagination again takes full sway, and the effects are at times sublime, recalling some of the descriptions in *The Ancient Mariner*. The Island of Tsalal is especially well imagined. Poe took the strange characters, which he describes upon the walls of the caves, from the descriptions of the hieroglyphs in the caverns of Mt. Sinai found in Stephens' *Arabia Petraea*. The note on the hieroglyphs, at the end of the story, is the first instance of Poe's interest in cipher, and the device of the brief preface, which purports to be written by " Pym " — who, however, mentions Poe — has about it all the machinery of the hoax in which the real author so delighted. J. K. Paulding was instrumental in getting Harpers to accept the story, which had a very small success. It was reviewed rather extensively in the United States and was republished by Wiley & Putnam in England,[505] in which country the rural readers are said to have been taken in. From Harpers, Poe received very little, and from the English publishers, as the custom then was, nothing at all.

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[504] Poe's description, however, was not superficial as this letter shows: Carter to Poe, Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 19, 1843. ". . . Within a week I have read for the first time, *Pym's Narrative*. I lent it to a friend, . . . a brother of Dr. O. W. Holmes, yet he is so completely deceived by the minute accuracy of some of the details, the remarks about the statements of the press, the names of people at New Bedford, etc., that though an intelligent and shrewd man he will not be persuaded that it is a fictitious work," etc.

One of the few pieces of work which have definitely been traced as Poe's, during this first New York sojourn, is a review of Stephens' *Arabia Petraea* which appeared in Dr. Hawks' *New York Review* for October, 1837. As Poe's procedure in this review was peculiarly characteristic, it is worth while to consider it here as a type of his method in such work. Poe has been accused of making a parade of classical and scientific learning which he did not possess. In certain respects the accusation is true, on the other hand it should be said that he was unusually conscientious about his reviews and went to no little trouble to look up authorities and to correspond with living scholars who might aid him in throwing light on the matter in hand. *Arabia Petraea* was a peculiarly erudite work, a record of travels in a land upon which, even now, modern archeology is only beginning to lift a doubtful curtain. It took the reader into the waste and desert places of a vanished civilization amid the doubtful shadows of pedantic classical, and Biblical learning. Poe's own argument from a religious standpoint was orthodox enough to satisfy the clergyman in whose magazine the review appeared. The rest of his material was made up by extract and paraphrase from the book itself, aided by some comments culled from a work on prophecy then recently published by a Dr. Keith. The main attempt at criticism turned on the exact meaning of two verses from the Bible, *Isaiah* 34.10, and *Ezekial* 35.7, for an interpretation of which Poe wrote to his friend Professor Anthon who replied[506] giving a careful rendering from the original Hebrew that Poe printed *verbatim*. No credit was given to Anthon, and Poe used the material as his own on several subsequent occasions. The impression given was that Poe knew Hebrew; the result was a rather erudite review. As it was *unsigned,* and was later attributed to Secretary Case, much of the criticism leveled against Poe in this instance is without force. His re-use of Anthon's material was, however, typical.

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[505] Wiley & Putnam, London, two printings, 1838, 1841. These editions were presumably authorized. A pirated edition appeared, London, 1844.

[506] Anthon to Poe, New York, June 1, 1837.

Of the intimacies of the inhabitants of 113½ Carmine Street between the Spring of 1837 and Midsummer, 1838, less is known than of almost any other epoch in their careers. For Poe, owing to the financial stress of the day, it was largely an era of marking time. The grand magazine scheme had to be postponed, but it was still carefully cherished. Gowans had introduced the Poes to James Pedder and his family. Pedder was an Englishman, a writer of juvenile stories, and a man of some charm. In 1838, he went to Philadelphia to edit the *Farmer's Cabinet* which he continued successfully until 1850. Pedder's removal to Philadelphia undoubtedly influenced Poe to turn his eyes in that direction. New York seemed to offer nothing. The Winter of 1838 was a bitter and terrible one. Combined with the money stringency, the suffering had been intense. Despite the efforts of Mrs. Clemm, the young author once more found himself in debt. He appears to have written to his friend Kennedy to obtain help in his always "temporary difficulties," but Mr. Kennedy was in straits himself and this time could do nothing.[507] It is probable that, by the Summer of 1838, Poe and Mrs. Clemm were no longer able to meet the rent. A move was imperative.

During the eighteen months or so which the family had passed in New York in 1837–38, it is likely that Poe and Virginia, with Mrs. Clemm, were sometimes seen at old St. Stephen's where the Reverend Doctor Hawks of North Carolina held forth, or perhaps St. John's, near the Carmine Street house, occasionally received more than graveyard visits. There must also have been Sunday walks on the Battery and the promenade of old Castle Garden where the band played. Bowling Green, past the genteel boarding houses opposite the *Adelphi House*, then in all its regal splendors, was a favorite place for a stroll. On the roof of the

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[507] See Poe to Brooks, Philadelphia, September 4, 1838. The name of the "friend" is left blank but understood between them.

New York Exchange fronting Wall Street — "built of white Westchester marble with four classic columns on the front" — one could watch the semaphore telegraph signaling to the vessels at Sandy Hook. For one shilling, the round trip on the Jersey City Ferry could be made on summer evenings from the foot of Cedar and Cortlandt Streets, and, from the Fulton Street slip, one could take the boat up the East River past Hell Gate to Prince's Linnæan Garden at Flushing —

> The proprietor exerts himself to obtain all native productions as well as interesting exotics. The village is small but pleasant. The garden of Mr. Prince will supply strangers of taste and science with rare seeds, flowers and trees, and has done much to introduce beautiful varieties into this country . . . the 4 hot-houses contain about 20,000 plants in pots; and the garden covers at 30 acres.

From passages in *The Landscape Garden* it seems highly probable that a certain traveler of decided taste, and a considerable pretension to science, visited Mr. Prince's Linnæan Gardens with a pale little girl on his arm.

Perhaps the good Mr. Gowans or other friends sometimes supplied theater tickets. These were the days when Edwin Forrest had just returned from his first English tour, and was going about playing Bulwer Lytton's *Lady of Lyons* to ecstatic audiences. He was later on to supply America with its first great divorce trial. Joseph Burke, a young Irish lad of twelve years, was appearing in *Norval*, a Scottish pastoral drama, in which for a reason impenetrable to this generation, the appearance of an adolescent Highland shepherd in kilts, strutting and mouthing the lines:

My name is Norval —
On the Grampian hills I watched
My father's flocks. . . .

caused old gentlemen in black stocks to clear their throats and delicate young ladies to weep. Maria Tree was singing *Home Sweet Home* from John Howard Payne's opera of *Clari*, and making the song immortal. *The Old Oaken Bucket* was roared stridently by all the good fellows in beaver hats who could crowd themselves into the bar of the old *Broadway National House.* G. P. Morris had just written *Woodman, Spare that Tree,* and *Zophiel, or The Bride of Seven,* was being memorized in the schools. Progress was just getting under way; the godless, scandalous, candle-lit Eighteenth Century was patronizingly referred to as " the former age "; while the new gas footlights were soon to be turned up for Thackeray, Longfellow, " purety," gentility — and the ruthless assault upon Mexico. Tables and telegraph instruments were both about to rap messages.

In the Summer of 1838, when hoop-skirts were beginning to drive out flounced petticoats, and some gentlemen were commencing to be circumspect about after-dinner drinking, Poe somehow or other borrowed enough money to join his friend Pedder in the Quaker City. Mrs. Clemm closed the house on Carmine Street and followed with Virginia. Before the end of August, the whole family were boarding in Philadelphia. Prospects were again beginning to brighten. It even looked for a time as if the great national magazine might soon be gotten under way. The field was ripe, and a prospectus of it was forever running in the head of " Israfel."

CHAPTER XIX
Grotesques and Arabesques

IN the Summer of 1838, probably toward the end of August, Poe and his little family journeyed to Philadelphia and took up their residence with James Pedder in a boarding house that was kept by the Pedder sisters on Twelfth Street, a little above Mulberry (Arch).[508]

Pedder, the Englishman previously mentioned, had already established for himself magazine connections in Philadelphia, and it may have been through his advice and probably his assistance that Poe had been induced to change his residence. The boarding house was evidently a temporary arrangement until Poe could obtain employment and settle himself some place else. Long unsuccess in New York had left him poor again. The money for the move had been borrowed, and there is some evidence that, before leaving New York, Mrs. Clemm had again been forced to beg and find loans where she could. A gentleman by the name of Bayard had been the victim this time, apparently unknown to Poe. The move was by no means ill-advised as the town chosen for the new home was the center of journalistic activity in the United States. Poe was simply taking his wares to the most promising market.

A few weeks after his arrival in the city that was to be his home for the next six years, Poe and his family moved from the Twelfth Street boarding house to another boarding establishment at Fourth and Arch (then Mulberry).[509] The move "down town," nearer to the district where the publishers' offices and printers' shops were then located, would seem to indicate that, at an early date after his arrival in Philadelphia, Poe had already found literary employment. *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* were partly prepared at this Arch Street boarding house, to which Lowell came later in 1845, bringing his bride. Mrs. Lowell wrote a letter from there during her honeymoon days and described the house as being then 127 Arch Street, at the northeast corner of Fourth and Arch, kept by Mrs. Parker, a Quakeress. It was clean and neat with a genteel reputation, the upper rooms in the rear being light and airy with white curtains and green trimmings. The Poes remained there until the beginning of September, 1838.[510]

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[508] The locations of Poe's places of abode, offices of magazines, and the addresses of persons with whom he was intimately acquainted in Philadelphia have been arrived at by a careful comparison of his own correspondence and letters about him, consultation of contemporary city directories, magazine and newspaper headings, and the city records dealing with the transfer of real estate and street and lot numbers. Wherever possible both the old and new street numerals are given. It has thus been possible to reconstruct Poe's Philadelphia haunts fairly accurately. The sojourn of Poe with the Pedders rests on the recollections of the Pedder sisters to whom Poe afterward presented some of his manuscripts.

At the end of the 1830's, Philadelphia was the second city of the Union, surpassed in population by New York City alone. The building of the Erie Canal, the access of population due to the first strong inset of the tide of immigration, and the trade of the then flourishing American merchant marine had given New York the lead some decades before; but it was by no means an overwhelming one, and, as Philadelphia was also a great seaport and was developing its hinterland by both railways and canals, there was then no certainty that the lead of Manhattan was to be permanent.[511]

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[509] Poe was known to have been at this house till the beginning of September, 1838. See Poe to N. C. Brooks, Philadelphia, September 4, 1838. "I am just leaving Arch Street for a small house," etc.

[510] From a letter of the first Mrs. James Russell Lowell, written during her honeymoon about the end of May, 1845. The character of Poe's residences is given carefully here as it indicates his mode of life, financial, and social conditions.

[511] The author is greatly in the debt of Francis Rawle, Esq., President of the Pennsylvania Historical Association, for free access to the library, catalogues, collections of prints, paintings, and the invaluable original manuscripts and literary correspondence in its possession. The preparation of Poe's contemporary Philadelphia background ranged over a wide field of material. Some of the more accessable references are: Oberholtzer, E. P., *The Literary History of Philadelphia,* Geo. W. Jacobs & Co., Publishers; the same, *Poe's Philadelphia Homes;* Smyth, A. H., *The Philadelphia Magazines and their Contributors,* Philadelphia, Robert M. Lindsey, 1892; files of *Burton's, Graham's, Godey's,* and other magazines to which Poe contributed; files of contemporary newspapers. Descriptions of persons and places are taken from contemporary engravings, paintings, and other illustra-

It was just about the turn of the tide in the race between those communities, which depended upon their natural native increase for growth, and those which were to profit by foreign accretion. Philadelphia belonged predominantly to the former class. It was, and it continued to be for many years, a peculiarly American city, with a culture surpassed by no other town on the continent. Its rapid commercial development, and the vast changes wrought by industrialism in Pennsylvania, have tended to obscure both its intellectual and political importance in the past. Nevertheless, for those who desire to study a flowering of intellectual and literary activity, peculiarly American in its nature, it is to Philadelphia as well as to Boston that one must turn.

Indeed, it was the peculiarly native fervor of the Philadelphia intellectuals, the too often provincial nature of their development, which has caused them to be forgotten; while the New Englanders, who identified themselves with the movements of world literature and continued in control of a national press, have continued to be more notably remembered. To those who are interested, however, in the literary, periodical, and journalistic output which most generally effected the contemporary American scene from the latter part of the Eighteenth Century, well up until the middle of the Nineteenth, Philadelphia is all important.

It was no mere boyish adventure which drew Benjamin Franklin from his brother's printing establishment in Boston to the Quaker City, even as early as 1723. It was merely an early exercise of his preëminent sagaciousness, for even at that time Philadelphia was the great publishing center of the Colonies.[512] From its presses issued a flood of religious and political tracts, impor-

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tions. Maps, almanacs, book catalogues, time tables, directories, first editions of Poe and other authors, and files of correspondence of literary and other persons connected with Poe directly, or with his environment, have been consulted.

[512] The important rôle which mechanical advances in printing have played in the spread of intellectual enlightenment has seldom been fully stressed. The mission of Franklin to England, at the behest of Governor Keith of Pennsylvania, to provide the best of type and presses then obtainable, immediately placed Philadelphia a century ahead of the other colonies in publishing. Seventeenth Century presses continued to be used elsewhere in America well up into Revolutionary times. The lead was long maintained in Philadelphia, where, in 1819, the art of lithography was introduced into the United States in the pages of the *Analectic Magazine*. Revolution in illustration followed.

tant newspapers, and the immortal sayings of " Poor Richard " himself. In Philadelphia appeared the first American editions of Shakespeare and Milton, *Pamela,* and *The Vicar of Wakefield,* and, in 1782, the first English Bible printed in the United States. In 1764 the first American religious journal had appeared in that city, and the record was continued well into the next century which saw the founding there, in 1802, of the *Juvenile Magazine;* the first native daily newspaper, the *American Daily Advertiser;* the first penny paper, the *Cent,* in 1830; the first monthly magazine in the country, and a mathematical journal. It was in Philadelphia, too, that there first appeared that outstanding feature of modern American journalism, the illustrated comic. The importance of the place as a center for political publication during and after the Revolution needs no comment. It was there that the Continental Congress sat and the Constitutional Convention convened. The ensuing ten years as the national capital continued to lend it a peculiar importance with a marked effect upon the circulation of its schoolbooks and newspapers.[513] All of this publishing activity, naturally enough, did not go on without a cultural and literary background.

Some of the early effects of the local literary lights are to be found embalmed in the pages of the *Columbian Magazine* which issued during the last two decades of the Eighteenth Century. These for the most part partook of the classical inanities of the period. Various gentlemen contributed translations, in couplets, from the Latin poets, or contented themselves with putting *Mother Goose* into Latin that attempted to render the exact tang of " hot butter blue beans " into the idiom of Cicero with consequent learned controversies. The only excursions into the realms of light were confined to some local descriptions and political articles not without merit but of a secondary order. The *Columbian* upon its demise was succeeded by the *Analectic* which condescended, though in a restrained manner, to deal with the existing world. There was also later the *North American Quarterly* which attempted, not without some success, to fulfill the function on this side of the water of the English reviews of the early Nineteenth Century. It dragged on a meritorious but somewhat dull life for some time.[514]

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[513] Poe's own early schoolbooks had been printed there. See note 98, page 65.

The comparative failure of the more pretentious literary efforts of Philadelphians, to gain and maintain a national or international reputation, may largely be set down to the nature of the social matrix in which they were fixed.[515] This did not apply so strongly to the journalistic and publishing groups that escaped the inherently warping effects of those who wrote from the background of Philadelphia blue-stocking society, priding itself on exclusiveness, an exclusiveness which it forgot sequestration worked both ways.

The social group of literateurs gathered most notably about Dr. Wistar who resided in a house at the southwest corner of Fourth and Locust Streets, long famous for its hospitality and the notables who gathered there. These gatherings indeed became traditional, and even after the death of the good doctor were carried on formally as "Wistar Parties." A picture of their founder appeared on the card of invitation, and was referred to as late as 1855 by Thackeray, as the "hospitable pig-tailed shade." Washington Irving, who occasionally visited his Quaker neighbors, complained of suffering, at Philadelphia literary gatherings and tea parties, "from an artillery of glances from long rows of young ladies."

There were, however, several groups where real discussion went on, and a world of ideas was developed and proposed which never wholly succeeded in getting born. It was an interesting world for all that, and at the time a real one; one which later surprised and delighted Thackeray who wrote home to his wife, "Do you know there are 500,000 people in Philadelphia? I dare say you had no idea thereof, and smile at the thought of there being a *monde* here and at Boston and New York." Mr. Thackeray was then being received with enthusiastic and substantial appreciation, so his wife could afford to smile. Yet there was a *monde* sure enough. The "Carey Vespers" succeeded the "Wistar Parties" and sounded a knell, the echoes of which can be heard even to-day by those who live South of Market.

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[514] Poe had undoubtedly pored over the pages of these and similar publications in Richmond at *Ellis & Allan*, who took subscriptions for such periodicals. His curious tendency to the semi-classical and the pedantic is largely to be explained by a reference to the magazine literature of his boyhood. The background of American writers of the '40s to the '60s cannot be understood without a familiarity with the early Nineteenth-Century magazines and newspapers upon which they were raised. Illustrations are often the primary source of literary inspirations. Philadelphia provided the best of these — see note 512.

[515] This does not apply to the political pamphlets and tracts. It must be remembered that the bulk of the Revolutionary doctrines, the only part of American literature that gained the ear of the world in the Eighteenth Century, was *printed* in Philadelphia where the best brains of the Colonies gathered.

Yet it was Philadelphia which produced the first genuine American literary figure, the curious novelist Charles Brockden Brown, whose triple name has set the style for so many thrice-named and third-rate American authors. About Brown there is an undoubted air of minor genius. It was his novels which in reality reproduced the American scene rather than the later, romantic and naïve frontier stories of Cooper, whose realities are confined largely to the sea. The neglected story of Charles Brockden Brown is one of the most interesting in American literature. Both his life story and his work had engaged the attention of Poe as early as Richmond boyhood days.[516]

By 1830, the first efflorescence of early Nineteenth Century magazine activity had pretty well worked itself out in Philadelphia and a new generation of editors, writers, and publishers had lately appeared on the scene. Graham, Burton, Godey, the Petersons, and many others were already active in the magazine world. The *Saturday Evening Post* had been begun in Franklin's old print shop, and, since March, 1833, John Greenleaf Whittier had been editing the *Pennsylvania Freeman* at 31 North Fifth Street.

The chief idea of the new journalism was the exploitation on a larger scale than ever before of the now literate middle classes and a deliberate appeal to the feminine reader, with all the moralistic, democratic, and namby-pamby tendencies which the attempt and the age implied.[517]

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[516] Poe's early fascination for Brown may perhaps be explained by a remark which Brown made about his own work: His books he said had, "great efficacy in beguiling his body of its pains and thoughts of their melancholy; in relieving the head and heart of their aches."

The first transition from the more robust, though stuffier, classically minded literature of the old school was noticeable in the sudden popularity of the Parlor Annuals and Ladies Gift Books which, from about 1825 on, began to roll off the press in Philadelphia. The first of these had been imported from England, but the large success of the *Atlantic Souvenir*, the *Bijou*, and the later *Opal* attracted a host of others to the field. Tennyson had found them in England a fertile field in which to sow lyrics, and Poe, as we have seen, had already "appeared." The realm of the "Parlour" was soon invaded more energetically by a host of ladies' and gentlemen's magazines.

By the time of Poe's arrival in Philadelphia in 1838, *Godey's* Magazine or *Lady's Book, Graham's Casket, Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, the *United States Military Gazette, Alexander's Weekly Messenger*, and a small host of others, all issued from the Quaker City, together with a crop of annuals and several flourishing newspapers. The town had attracted to it many editors of great ability from other places, chief among whom was Louis A. Godey, the editor of the *Book* which bore his name, the *Ladies Home Journal* of its time. He had associated with him Mrs. Sarah J. Hale — author of *Mary Had a Little Lamb* — and formerly editress of a Boston journal,[518] and Louis M'Michael. It was Mr. Godey who first successfully reached the audience of Ameri-

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[517] The announcements and editorials of the magazines of the era make their publishing philosophy sufficiently clear.

[518] Mrs. Sarah J. Hale published a pamphlet of child's verses, Dr. Lowell Nason of Boston, publisher, 1830. It is now exceedingly rare and contains some of the best known children's lyrics in the language.

"Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow,"

and —

"If ever I see on brush or tree
Young birds in a pretty nest.
I must not in my play
Steal the young birds away
To grieve their mother's breast.

Mrs. Hale had known of Poe since 1827, and had written a letter to her son, at can womanhood. To this audience, he and his staff catered most deliberately with the peculiarly pure and pretty sentimentality of the early American-Victorian scene.

The democratic theory of universal literacy was already beginning to provide an audience on a scale hitherto undreamed of. It was an audience of which Poe was one of the first to become aware, and it was composed of both men and women of all classes. But in Poe's case, there was a peculiar situation. Writers had hitherto, for the most part, addressed themselves perforce to those who could read. But those who could read had constituted an exclusive intellectual minority necessarily tinged with classic ideals and aristocratic convictions. The generation at the end of the '30s in the United States, was the first to come to maturity under the public school system. The situation was now changed and Poe was aware of it. He desired to become generally known to this uneducated but reading generation, yet he continued to address them as if they were all capable of desiring serious literature, universally thoughtful, hopeful of being cleverly amused, and interested in genuine criticism. In this he was mistaken. Poe's commercial hypotheses for a great magazine were well laid, but his own unadulterated message was far over the heads of his audience. It was only when it was controlled and altered by the influence of his proprietors and boss editors that it found a large contemporary reception. Yet it was this very process of adulteration and artistic cheapening that his literary ideals and self-confident ego could never stomach.

For such reasons, and the philosophy that lay behind them, Poe was successful in increasing the circulation of the *Messenger*, *Burton's*, and *Graham's*, and for the same reasons coupled with his own infirmities, he forever failed in launching any successful magazine of his own. For literature and posterity the outcome has been fortunate. Neither Poe nor his successive employers fully realized the anomaly inherent in the facts, and Israfel continued, inadvertently, to address himself to an audience élite

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West Point in 1830, inquiring about him. This partly explains Poe's frequent appearance in *Godey's* where Mrs. Hale held sway for years with telling effect on the American feminine world.

enough to be capable of remembering and cherishing what was valuable.[519]

All else in his work, all that was purely contemporary, has suffered the inevitable canker of ruthless time. It is a strange paradox, for the very quality which has preserved him to fame was fatal to the financial and physical prospects of the man. He was doomed forever to struggle with a hopeless and degrading poverty.

Other writers of the age avoided poverty by various expedients: Longfellow was a professor, Emerson was a minister, Holmes was a doctor, Hawthorne found refuge in a minor government employ that Poe tried to obtain in vain; Lowell escaped by several routes. Poe alone of his generation, unable to long cope with the world in any practical way, remained the poet, the dreamer, and the artist, dependent solely upon the motion of his pen from left to right for a precarious living. He was the only example in his generation in America of the detached literary type, the traditional starving poet.[520] There was no system of patronage, no benevolent government, no aristocracy; and he starved. For this, his practical countrymen have from time to time pointed the finger of scorn. There are even now many school texts which hold Poe up as a genius but a horrible moral example. Thus mediocrity is confirmed in its mistrust of the unusual, and dullness comforted by respectability.

The galaxy of publications already noticed as appearing in Philadelphia in 1838–39 were not without the ample aid of the crafts which produced them. Thither had flocked artists, able and humdrum illustrators, printers, engravers, lithographers, designers, and binders. The town was full of their shops and haunts;

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[519] George R. Graham, however, afterwards commented on this in his defense of Poe. *Graham's Magazine*, 1850:

"The character of Poe's mind was of such an order as not to be very widely in demand. The class of educated mind which he could readily and profitably reach was small — the channels through which he could do so at all were few . . ." etc. Mr. Graham was the most successful magazine editor of his era and deserves respectful attention in his estimate of Poe.

[520] It is characteristic of the age that the poet Longfellow who embodied the genius of mediocrity received a bust in Westminster Abbey while Poe's obscure grave in Baltimore was sown with thistles.

and in these places and among their coteries Poe spent much of his time.

Printing and publishing was thus taking on many of its modern aspects. The printing was largely bad or mediocre, but in the field of illustrations, despite much execrable taste, there was considerable mechanical advance. Steel engraving, lithographing, and wood cuts were much in vogue. There was even an adventuring on the part of publishers into the domain of stenciled and lace perforated offerings of valentine-like aspect, tinsel trimmings, and ornamented hand stamps and decalcomanias.[521] An examination of *Godey's Lady's Book,* say for the year 1844, will not be without profit for those interested. The partly hand-colored fashion plates have a value of their own.[522]

Against the tawdry, the cheap, the pretty and the sentimentally moral illustrators, Poe struggled and resolutely set his face. It was one of the chief items of complaint against the periodicals of the day which he constantly reiterates. His own ideal was to employ only woodcuts, comparatively simple, and executed by competent artists. In his correspondence with Lowell the point is frequently stressed.[523] Such an item, although comparatively unimportant, yet gives an insight into the well rounded artistic probity of the man. His own juvenile predilection for the pencil was not without result.[524] In this connection one more point must be noticed.

Stereotyping had now been in successful use in the United States for about ten years. The first largely successful application of the principle had been in *Harper's Family Library,* which dated from the early '30s.[525] Books could now be printed rapidly from plates; the chances of reduplication were enormously enhanced; and the output, in an age when all type was hand-set, was vastly increased and made cheaper.[512] It was a mechanical advance which directly affected the type of works in which Poe found himself engaged; *i.e.*, textbooks, the publication of collected works, and the printing of periodicals.

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[521] Louis A. Godey was once described as a "decalcomaniac."

[522] It is not to be supposed that people actually appeared as the fashion plates of any period show them. The point is that the spirit of the times can be glimpsed in fashion plates, because that is the way people *desired* to appear.

[523] See also Poe's prospectus for the *Penn* and the *Stylus* and his contract with the artist, F. O. C. Darley.

[524] See Poe's own drawing of Miss Royster, Volume I.

[525] A good example of this *Family Library* is *A description of Pitcairn's Island and its Inhabitants with an Authentic account of the Mutiny of the Ship Bounty*, J. Harper, New York, 82 Cliff St., 1832. Harper's stereotype edition. Poe's *Arthur Gordon Pym* had been made possible by cheap printing processes used by the Harpers.

The old publishing firm of Carey, Lea & Carey, to whom Poe was known since Baltimore days, after undergoing the change of Lea & Carey, had an off-shoot in Lea & Blanchard.[526] Both firms were now briskly engaged in flooding the American market with reprints of Byron, Scott, and later of Dickens, upon which, under existing copyright laws, the matter of authors' royalties was a mere courtesy. With these firms and with the copyright situation, Poe was soon greatly interested.

For the rest, Philadelphia was a pleasant place to be. Living was cheap. The markets were not even second to those of Baltimore. Rents in town were reasonable, while the country about was verdantly fertile and contained some of the most satisfactory landscape in the eastern United States. The pastoral and romantic aspects of the Delaware, the Schuylkill, and the Wissahickon valleys had already attracted the brush and pencil of various foreign artists as early as the Eighteenth Century. Over it all was the peculiarly tranquil and yet alluring legend of the peaceful experiment of William Penn.

The city itself was at that time (1838) composed almost exclusively of red brick dwellings with white stone trimmings and smooth marble stoops. The streets were paved with round cobbles, broken by flagstones at the crossings, and stone gutters down the center, but provided with broad brick pavements well shaded in all the residential and even the business districts. There were many walled gardens, churchyards, and open spaces, particularly Franklin Square with a then famous fountain, for the town prided itself on its water-supply, one of the finest in the world.

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[526] Mathew Carey, an economist of considerable influence, was the "ancestor" of various Philadelphia publishing houses, in which the name "Carey" appears even now. He was a great high tariff man, also famous for his "standing Bible type" from which over two hundred thousand impressions were struck between 1804 and 1825. The forms stood till 1844. Carey was also influential in introducing Didot's stereotyping process into the United States. Carey, of Carey & Lea, was his son. Poe was much about the plant and dealt with the junior partner, Mr. Lea, in 1829 and the '30s, and corresponded with the firm. See Chapter X, page 250.

One of the peculiarities of Philadelphia was the faucet which had replaced the earlier pump before every house. From these every morning a gushing stream was turned over the side walks and streets. Housemaids flourished brooms, and even scrubbed the brick pavements with flat stones and sand, while the gleaming brass rails, door knockers and knobs were the remarked objects of their peculiar and inveterate attention. Water was dashed about freely. In the early mornings it ran down the central gutter in a veritable river, imparting a spotless air to the town, but endangering the apparel of Captain Marryat and other British travelers who insisted upon their customary morning constitutionals.

The plan of the town was then unusual, consisting, for the most part, of regularly numbered streets crossing each other at right angles, a scheme whose literal convenience has unfortunately spread over the rest of the country. The houses with their singularly regular and precise system of numbering bespoke the somewhat prim and staid nature of their owners by displaying their large unmistakable brass numerals with glittering pride. The whole impression of the place was one of comfortable and prosperous order. There was not wanting, however, a decided and peculiar charm to the scene.

The architecture still bore, predominantly, the cast of the Eighteenth Century and the colonial, but it was, by now, largely and not inharmoniously mixed with the columns, façades, and the straight, brick fronts of the early Republic. The roofs, and the quaint angles of the forest of domestic chimneys lent a picturesque guise. There were many notable public buildings; the Mint, and the Pennsylvania Hospital, the simple but impressive Quaker Meeting House, and Christ Church in the manner of Sir Christopher Wren. With the aspect of all of these, Poe was to become particularly familiar; and with the shops, the old *United States Hotel,* and the Exchange.

The Post Office, a place of frequent resort for the whole town, was at Independence, then known as Congress Hall. Here Poe called often for his own mail and that of the magazines with which he was connected. In 1838 there were two ordinary mails to New York and "down east" that closed at five A.M. and five P.M., and there was a daily mail south and west. The Post Office kept open from sunrise until eight P.M. but only for one hour on Sunday. Stamps were not used until about ten years later, nor envelopes,[527] and "gentlemen of reputation" could establish credit at the Post Office and settle their bills monthly.

One of the sights of Philadelphia was the office of the principal mail contractor, a little two-story building on the west side of Third Street, where the stages and expresses departed for all directions. The contractor was a well-known local character, one Jim Reeside, nicknamed "The Admiral," a tremendous man, with whose wife it was well for the editors of magazines to be friends. Mr. Reeside kept famous gray horses, and a huge dog which slept in front of the office on the brick pavement while the patrons of the United States mail awaited the end of his nap. His repose was dangerous to disturb, and the world, for the most part, possessed itself in patience or went around.[528]

Poe's business in Philadelphia for the most part took him into the lower part of town, down the broad "S" shaped sweep of the wide Dock Street, past the white pillared Merchants Exchange. Here the newspaper, magazine, printers', and engravers' offices were located, about whose haunts on Front and Dock

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[527] Poe's correspondence with Dr. Snodgrass and others in the latter '30s and early '40s' is still carried on with folded foolscap paper and wafer seals, the postage being prepaid. Postage was often a serious item with Poe. The rates were high, averaging 3 cents for a prospectus of the *Penn* or *Stylus*, for instance. Private "letter mail" companies attempted to compete with the government but were closed up by federal actions. The American Letter Mail Co. of Philadelphia early used stamps. Poe once cautions a correspondent to use Hamden's Express instead of the Post Office on account of cheaper rates. See Poe to Lowell, February 4, 1843.

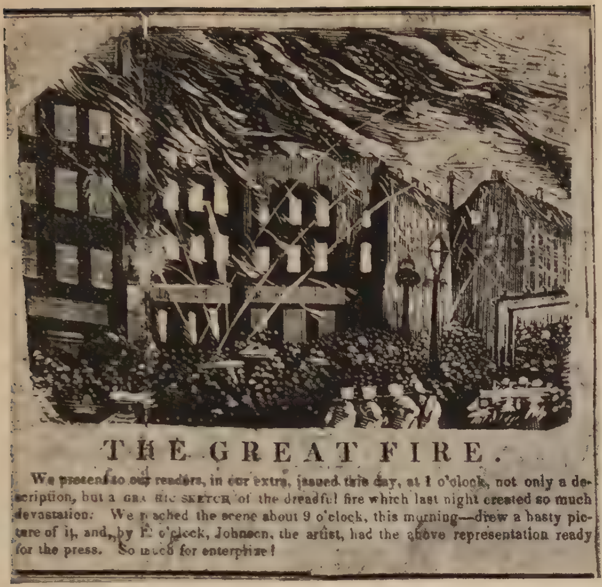
[528] The apparently disconnected anecdote is introduced here to show the vast change that has taken place since Poe's day. A visit to the present Philadelphia Post Office with this little incident in mind will serve to bring home the enormous gulf between the world of Poe's day and our own. Tons of mail now leave the Philadelphia Post Office daily. The entire United States in Poe's era did not furnish this quantity.

Streets he was frequently seen. The river front was a mass of shipping whose masts and sails topped the flat roofs of blank-faced brick warehouses separated by narrow, stone-paved alleys. Drays, Dearborn wagons, York carryalls, coaches, and trotting wagons rumbled past over the cobbles, laden with heavy bales of merchandise or sedate passengers, making a frightful din punctuated by the oaths of the drivers and the incessant cracking of long whips.

Ladies from the fashionable districts came shopping in coaches, and little one-horse hacks. At five o'clock the merchants' sulkies and the bankers' carriages gathered in front of the money-changers' offices where messengers and merchants' clerks rushed in and out, exchanging at the latest quotations their wild-cat money and state banknotes. Jay Cook and other rising young financiers stood on tables, quoting from memory the latest price on Louisiana or Arkansas money, picking out with unerring eye the lamentably frequent counterfeit bills. At closing time apprentices put up the wooden shutters across the square-framed shop windows; hatters took in their hooked poles upon which were hung rows of high beaver hats; the white canvas awnings in front of general stores, which gave the street in daytime the aspect of an arcade, were rolled up, and the world, that could afford it, crowded on to the Chestnut Street accommodation stages and rode off home.

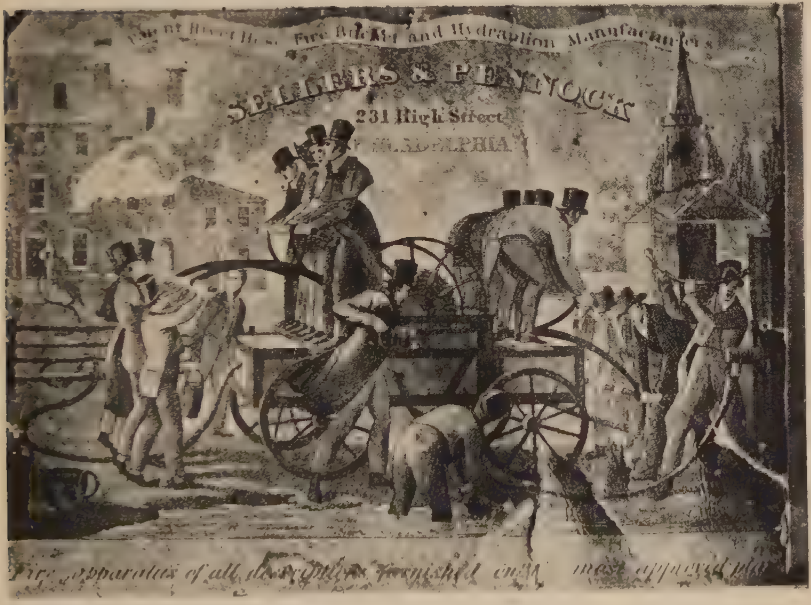
For the most part, however, it was a world that walked, nor was it much of an effort. A stroll of twenty of thirty " blocks " in almost any direction took one into the country. The night watchmen then began to make their rounds stopping at the little sentry-box stations at the corners to light the whale-oil lights, to rattle their sticks, and to proclaim the time of the night with an " all's well."

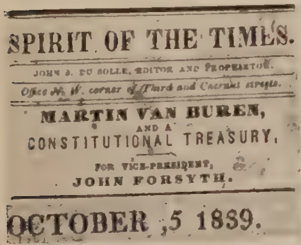
But the nights were, by no means, all peaceful. If any city in the Union could have inspired a poet to write *The Bells,* it was Philadelphia! One of the outstanding features of life in that place was the frequent fire alarms, real and imaginary. Scarcely a night passed without a rushing to and fro of the volunteer fire companies to a great clanking of gongs, blowing of bugles and



THE GREAT FIRE.

We present to our readers, in our extra, issued this day, at 1 o'clock, not only a description, but a GRAPHIC SKETCH of the dreadful fire which last night created so much devastation. We reached the scene about 9 o'clock, this morning—drew a hasty picture of it, and, by [illegible] o'clock, Johnson, the artist, had the above representation ready for the press. So much for enterprise!


Fire Buckets and Hydraulion Manufacturers
231 High Street
Fire apparatus of all descriptions



SPIRIT OF THE TIMES.

JOHN S. DU SOLLE, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Office N. W. corner of Third and Chestnut streets.

MARTIN VAN BUREN,
AND A
CONSTITUTIONAL TREASURY.

FOR VICE-PRESIDENT,
JOHN FORSYTH.

OCTOBER ,5 1839.

A Characteristic Incident in Philadelphia of the 1840's

And a bit of the enterprising journalism of the day concerned with firemen and engravers

The Philadelphia Markets and the Horns of Plenty ringing of bells. The great bell at Congress Hall tapped the signal of the quarter in which the fire lay. Thither the volunteer firemen rushed, clad in all the splendors of leather helmet, varnished hip boots, and oil-cloth cloaks, — only to find the alarm a false one, or to stage a disgraceful riot caused by professional jealousies while some unfortunate's house went up in flames. These fire companies provided for many, the only social and political organization that they knew, and were at once the despair and the pride of the municipality which they kept in perpetual turmoil.

In the early morning, the town awoke to the rumble of market carts and farmers' wagons and the clatter of the shaggy hoofs of rural nags ridden by buxom, red-cheeked German girls clutching brown crocks of butter, and paniers swollen with loaves of rye bread, *pumpernickel* and cheese. Such made their way to the long, low market buildings that stretched for squares along lower High (Market) Street, high-roofed sheds set upon pillars, with walled stalls, where the generous products of one of the most fertile farm regions in the United States astonished the foreign traveler.

Sixteen pound turkeys could be bought for $2. Wild game, rabbits, partridges, pheasants, quail, and venison were exposed in abundance. The butchers slaughtered frequently and made the occasion a fête day, parading through the town in white smocks to the noise of trumpet and drum, with skinned calves, the carcasses of pink scrubbed pigs with carrots in their mouths, or even an occasional bear, displayed in their carts. Such occasions were advertised widely, when the weather was hot, and the meat was bought up quickly.

Ducks, shad, and reed birds; great crocks of eggs, and strings of fowl decorated the market arcade for blocks. Here, amid piles of apples, heaps of red carrots, the long, green ears of maize, and bushels of glistering pea pods, the ladies of Philadelphia, despised by their Boston sisters for their early marketing habits, moved amid a crowd of prim-bonneted Quaker maidens and their broad-brimmed papas. Buttonless Dunkards, yellow-turbaned negresses purchasing sturgeon meat at one cent the pound were to be seen, and shovel-bearded Moravians in from Bethlehem in covered wagons rubbing shoulders with the eagerly buying pursers of departing ships in smart shore togs and varnished hats. Here, Mrs. Clemm and Virginia were glad to come with a market basket to be cheaply filled, and through these arcades Poe passed many a morning on his way to work at *Graham's* near the old Exchange.

It was a prosperous and hearty world. One in strange contrast to the grotesque dreams of the Dreamer who had come to live there. It was the upper strata of its population, which marketed with such gusto and fed upon scrappel and blood sausages for breakfast, that now composed a large part of his audience, and there were only a few of them to whom he could really speak.

They, content with the glow of carefully tempered twilight,
Measured pulses of joy, and colorless growth of the senses,
Stand aghast at my dream of the sun, and the sound, and the splendor.[529]

To the inner circle of the Wistar Parties, Poe never penetrated. His outer semblance was for a brief time known to the proprietors of magazines and the editors of newspapers. Among them he moved a strange, marked figure, clad nearly always in shabby black, his eyes forever turned inward, beholding little but his dream. Even this, as he said, was a dream within another dream — the outside world which he so little marked and with whose various embodied shapes he conversed, as with ghosts.

Yet in Philadelphia, for a short time, he was to know the most prosperous if not the happiest days of his manhood. The shadow, which lay somberly over its clean-swept streets and spotless houses, was the steadily failing health of his girl-wife. For the next decade Virginia was slowly dying. As it was, for her, and for her debt-burdened husband, the brief stay in the respectable, if not fashionable, boarding house on Arch Street with the Pedders had drawn to a close.

About September 5, 1838, Poe removed from the house at Fourth and Arch Street to a new dwelling located at Sixteenth near Locust. He describes it as a "small house."[530] Less is known about this residence than of any other which the family occupied while in Philadelphia. The building has long since been torn down, and even the exact extent of the stay there is not known. This seems to be the house which Captain Mayne Reid, who about that time became acquainted with the Poes, describes as "a lean-to of three rooms (there may have been a garret with a closet) of painted plank construction, supported against the gable of a four-story brick house." Reid's description could apply to no other dwelling occupied by the Poes while in Philadelphia.[531] Most of the fresh material which was written for Burton must have been prepared at the Sixteenth Street residence during the Fall and early Winter of 1839.

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[529] Writing from Kennet Square near Philadelphia some years later, Bayard Taylor bursts into an ecstacy of indignation against the Philadelphia environment and its smugness. He knew it only too well.

The day before moving from Arch Street, Poe wrote to his old Baltimore friend, Nathan C. Brooks, telling him that on account of two important affairs then under way he could not undertake to write a critical article on Washington Irving which Brooks had previously requested.[530] At that time Brooks had just bought out the *North American Quarterly Magazine of Baltimore* and changed it to a monthly under the name of the *American Museum of Literature and Arts*. Poe's remarks about Irving and his own methods of criticism are not without interest:

> My main reason for declining is . . . I could not do the review well at short notice. The truth is, I can scarcely say I am conversant with Irving's writings, having read nothing of his since I was a boy, save his *Granada*. It would be necessary to give his entire works a perusal. . . . Irving is much overrated, and a nice distinction might be drawn between . . . what is due to the pioneer solely, and what to the writer.
>
> The merit, too, of his tame propriety and faultlessness of style should be candidly weighed. He should be compared with Addison, something being hinted about imitation. . . . A bold and a prior investigation of Irving's claims would strike home, take my word for it. The American literary world never saw anything of the kind yet. . . .[530]

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[530] Poe to N. C. Brooks, September 4, 1838. Also reminiscences of John Sartain, Mayne Reid, etc.

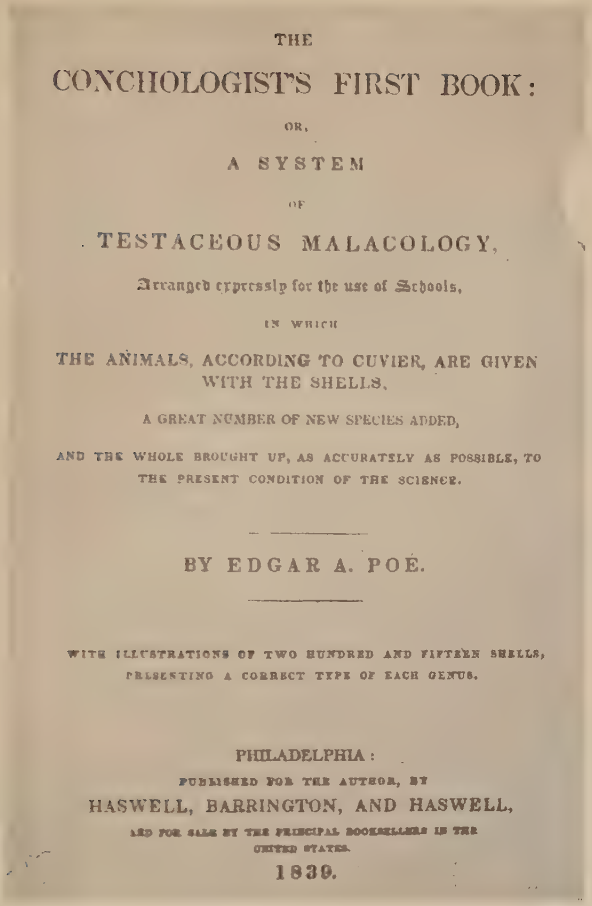
[531] Reid's description may apply to the Spring Garden Street house occupied by the Poes three years later. That was a three-story brick house, however, and the descriptions cannot be reconciled. Reid's recollections may confuse both places (sic).

Brooks was at this time printing a good deal of the work which Poe must have done in New York. What the two important matters were, which Poe had on hand at that time and alleges as the reason for refusing an Irving article to Brooks, cannot be definitely stated. One of them, however, was the preparation of material for a textbook on conchology.

The Conchologist's First Book, or, A System of Testaceous Malacology, arranged expressly for the use of schools, etc., was the sixth volume to which Poe lent the force of his name. It was published in April, 1839, in Philadelphia by Haswell, Barrington & Haswell. The number of the first edition is not known. The book is bound in brown paper boards with an outside cover with stamped illustrations of shells, weeds, and grasses, and although for the most part simply a rearrangement of the work of others, it is copyrighted in Poe's name ("Edgar A. Poe").

The volume was purely a piece of hack work upon which Poe hoped to realize enough from its sale as a textbook to support him till he could find literary connections in Philadelphia. Pedder acted as the go-between with Haswell, Barrington & Haswell, and Professor Wyatt probably furnished Poe with the English text from which, for the most part, the work was taken. It was probably the definite engagement upon this book, arranged by Pedder with the publishers, which had finally induced Poe to leave New York. Philadelphia, on account of the many engravers then engaged there, was a peculiarly good place to issue a volume which demanded extensive technical illustration.

The publisher's office was located at 293 Market Street, and there, during the Autumn of 1838 and the early Winter of 1839, Poe spent much of his time working on the volume on shells. He was assisted in his labors by a Mr. Isaac Lee, and Professor Thomas Wyatt, a neighbor, who was really responsible for the volume, and supplied most of the necessary scientific information. Wyatt had previously issued through Harpers "his late excellent *Manual of Conchology,*" a book which had proved so expensive to publish that Harpers could not afford to reprint it. Wyatt went about lecturing and selling his books, and, it is said, paid Poe $50 for the use of his name on the title page, as being one



THE

CONCHOLOGIST'S FIRST BOOK:

OR,

A SYSTEM

OF

TESTACEOUS MALACOLOGY,

Arranged expressly for the use of Schools,

IN WHICH

THE ANIMALS, ACCORDING TO CUVIER, ARE GIVEN
WITH THE SHELLS,

A GREAT NUMBER OF NEW SPECIES ADDED,

AND THE WHOLE BROUGHT UP, AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE, TO
THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE SCIENCE.

BY EDGAR A. POE.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS OF TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN SHELLS,
PRESENTING A CORRECT TYPE OF EACH GENUS.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY
HASWELL, BARRINGTON, AND HASWELL,
AND FOR SALE BY THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS IN THE
UNITED STATES.
1839.

The Conchologist's First Book: or, A System of Testaceous Malacology

Philadelphia, 1839

EDGAR ALLAN POE's fifth published volume

A piece of hack work characteristic of American publishing of the era to which Poe lent his name as editor

Courtesy of a New York Collector

which would be likely to further sales. The whole scheme was obviously carefully arranged to avoid trouble over copyright with Harpers, the effect of which was to alienate the "affections" of that firm from Poe and to stand in his way six years later when he wished them, through Professor Anthon, to issue his collected works. To avoid any other legal troubles the work was deliberately based on an English text.

The Conchologist's First Book, 1839, 12 mo. pp. 156; had a preface and introduction written by Poe and signed "E.A.P." which contained an explanation of the terms together with acknowledgments to Lee and Wyatt. This was followed by three pages of an introduction in which Bergman, De Blainville, and Parkinson are quoted, followed by twelve pages of engraved and beautifully colored plates of shells and their parts, boldly lifted *in toto* from an English book, *The Conchologist's Text Book,* by Captain Thomas Brown, to whom no credit is given. Poe simply paraphrased in the body of the book from Wyatt for his nomenclature and descriptions of shells. This, of course, was by arrangement. For the description of the animals, Poe, who had now become deft, translated from Cuvier, giving that author credit. The unfortunate Brown, however, was completely left out.[532] Professor Wyatt concluded the volume with a glossary and an index written by himself. There was a second edition with ten added pages in 1840, under Poe's name, a third anonymous one in 1845 by the same Philadelphia publisher. The book was reprinted in England, and in all no less than nine editions have been traced.

It was not long before Poe was accused of stealing the work entirely from Brown. Poe replied indignantly, "I wrote the Preface and Introduction, and translated from Cuvier the accounts of the animals, etc. *All* school-books are necessarily made in a similar way." He then goes on to describe the usual procedure of "quacks" and claims that he did not intend to give the impression that the work was original with him. His defense is only partly sustained by the facts, and at best the book remains an unfortunate literary transaction. It later brought him more obloquy than money, but undoubtedly served to turn his attention to the outrageous condition of international copyright, a subject which he afterward discussed with Dickens and which led subsequently to Poe's taking up the study of law and registering as a law student.

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[532] "Poe added such important integral portions to *his* book . . . that the name of "Brown" was later dropped from the title page by the publishers, and Poe's ideas worked into the new edition. This is the first time that this fact has ever been stated. . . ." A Richmond correspondent to the author, March 10, 1926.

Poe has also been credited with a translation and digest of Lemonier's *Natural History,* that was published in the Spring of 1839 under Wyatt's name. In a review of the book in *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1839, Poe said that he wrote " from personal knowledge, and the closest inspection and criticism." This simply means that, at the time, he and Wyatt were working on the *Conchology,* the latter was also translating Lemonier, and Poe perhaps occasionally helped. His review is an obvious puff for a friend's book and not one of his own. From this work, however, the poet acquired not a little definite technical knowledge. Even the printing of textbooks was grist to his mill.

The rest of Poe's time, in the Spring of 1839, was taken up with the free-lance publishing of articles in various magazines to which he was already known, and with the making of contacts in Philadelphia with the local press, where his old friend L. A. Wilmer, who had left Baltimore on foot when ousted from the editor's chair of the *Visitor,* was now in one of his frequently shifted saddles. Consequently, in May, the *Saturday Evening Chronicle* published Poe's grotesque story of *The Devil in the Belfry,* a satire on the credulity of the conventionality of the mob. About a month before, his poem, *The Haunted Palace,* which was introduced into *The House of Usher,* appeared in the *Baltimore Museum.* This poem is an allegory depicting the progress of madness, and is the first thoroughgoing intimation from Poe that he could detect, in himself at least, the possibility of the final *dénouement* of the hero of the poem and of *The House of Usher.* That he, himself, and the strange conditions of his marriage, are in part the subjects of the story and the poem, there can remain no doubt. The description of Roderick Usher is the most perfect pen-portrait of Poe himself which is known. It might be labelled "Self Portrait of the Artist at the Age of Thirty."

> The character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion, an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve, a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity; — these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten.

Certain passages in *The House of Usher,* chiefly those dealing with "a small picture . . . of an immensely long and rectangular vault and tunnel . . . a flood of intense rays rolled throughout and bathed the whole in a ghostly and inappropriate splendour," and "the morbid condition of the auditory nerve," suggest unmistakably that previous to this time Poe was already familiar with the effects of opium as, indeed, *Ligeia* also strongly implies.[533] And it is Virginia, too, who is embodied in the wasting frame of the Lady Madeline. "The disease of the Lady Madeline had long baffled the skill of the physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person," her strange relations with her brother in the story, and his unmentionable reason for wishing to entomb her alive, all recall the long tortures that Poe underwent by the bedside of his slowly fading *wife* and *cousin.*

It is, indeed, in the order of the event of his heroes and heroines that the progress of the phases of Poe's inner life, its integration and disintegration, are to be read. He had, by now, well developed all of his ideal types except one. The Byronic hero of the prideful youth had gone with little Elmira Royster, the princess of *Tamerlane.* "Helen," the yearning and mourned for heroine, a compound of Mrs. Stanard and Frances Allan, had been duly celebrated in pæans and lyrics; "Ligeia," the strange mental opposite of Virginia and her prototypes had arisen to give him ghostly comfort in the barren cave of his marriage. Illness and early death overtook them all in the pages upon which they strangely moved. In Baltimore and New York, Poe's hero had become neurasthenic and hypochondriac, haunted by incense and mystery, the drug addict and the victim of supernatural fears. All of these were Poe himself and the women he loved, simulacra or defense mechanisms to compensate him in the realm of dreams for the sorrows and disappointments of his own life. All the apartments, the houses, the very gardens in which these dream-phantoms moved, were furnished with a magnificence which arabesquely caricatured the grotesque bareness of his real dwellings and the sordid places in which fate compelled him to dwell.

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[533] See Chapter XVI, page 371, for a full discussion of this. It is not the intention here to show that Poe was an habitual user of opium. That he resorted to it from time to time is plainly indicated. Also see Chapter XXIII and Chapter XXVI, pages 700 and 817.

Let us look for a moment at an ideal chamber in which Poe sees the happy owner peacefully asleep. Who that sleeper was, can be safely left to the reader: "The Proprietor lies asleep on a sofa — the weather is cool — the time is near midnight: we will make a sketch of the room during his slumber": [534]

Poe's Ideal Room

. . . It is oblong — some thirty feet in length and twenty-five in breadth — a shape affording the best (ordinary) opportunities for the adjustment of furniture. It has but one door — by no means a wide one; which is at one end of the parallelogram, and but two windows, which are at the other. These latter are large, reaching down to the floor, — have deep recesses — and open on an Italian *veranda*. Their panes are of a crimson-tinted glass, set in rosewood framings, more massive than usual. They are curtained within the recess, by a thick silver tissue adapted to the shape of the window, and hanging loosely in small volumes. Without the recess are curtains of an exceedingly rich crimson silk, fringed with a deep network of gold, and lined with the silver tissue, which is the material of the exterior blind. There are no cornices; but the folds of the whole fabric (which are sharp rather than massive, and have an airy appearance) issue from beneath a broad entablature of rich giltwork, which encircles the room at the junction of the ceiling and walls. The drapery is thrown open also, or closed by means of a thick rope of gold loosely enveloping it, and resolving itself easily into a knot; no pins or other such devices are apparent. The colors of the curtains and their fringe — the tints of crimson and gold — appear everywhere in profusion, and determine the character of the room. The carpet — of Saxony material — is quite half an inch thick, and is of the same crimson ground, relieved simply by the appearance of a gold cord (like that festooning the curtains) slightly relieved above the surface of the *ground,* and thrown upon it in such a manner as to form a succession of short irregular curves — one occasionally overlying the other. The walls are prepared with a glossy paper of a silver-gray tint, spotted with small Arabesque devices of a fainter hue of the prevalent crimson. Many paintings relieve the expanse of the paper. There are, nevertheless, three or four female heads, of an ethereal grottoes of Stanfield, or the lake of the Dismal Swamp of Chapman. These are chiefly landscapes of an imaginative case — such as the fairy beauty — portraits in the manner of Sully. The tone of each picture is warm but dark. There are no 'brilliant effects.' Repose speaks in all. Not one is of small size. Diminutive paintings give that *spotty* look to a room, which is the blemish of so many a fine work of Art overtouched. The frames are broad but not deep, and richly carved, without being *dulled* or filigreed. They have the whole lustre of burnished gold. They lie flat on the walls, and do not hang off with cords. The designs themselves are often seen to better advantage in this latter position, but the general appearance of the chamber is injured. But one mirror — and this not a very large one — is visible. In shape it is nearly circular — and it is hung so that a reflection of the person can be obtained from it in none of the ordinary sitting-places of the room. Two large low sofas of rosewood and crimson silk, gold flowered, form the only seats, with the exception of two light conversation chairs, also of rosewood. There is a pianoforte (rosewood, also), without cover, and thrown open. An octagonal table formed altogether of the richest gold-threaded marble, is placed near one of the sofas. This is also without cover — the drapery of the curtains has been thought sufficient. Four large and gorgeous Sevres vases, in which bloom a profusion of sweet and vivid flowers, occupy the slightly rounded angles of the room. A tall candelabrum, bearing a small antique lamp with highly perfumed oil, is standing near the head of my sleeping friend. Some light and graceful hanging shelves, with golden edges and crimson silk cords with golden tassels, sustain two or three hundred magnificently bound books. Beyond these things, there is no furniture, if we except an Argand lamp, with a plain crimson-tinted ground-glass shade, which depends from the lofty vaulted ceiling by a single slender gold chain, and throws a tranquil but magical radiance over all.

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[534] From Poe's *Philosophy of Furniture, Burton's Magazine*, May, 1840.

Now this is something more than a room to be used as a standard for better home furnishings by the readers of the

"*Gent's Mag.*" It is in reality the secret inner chamber of the poet's dreams, and as such, it is worthy of considerable attention from a psychological point of view. It is the same room, slightly altered, in which "Ligeia" strove to enter the corpse of "Rowena," the apartment of "Roderick Usher," and the room where the "Raven" appeared. It is the scarlet and gold apartment where "Prince Ego" lies asleep in the soporific fumes of a perfumed lamp, carefully curtained from the world, suffused by a bloody-scarlet glow of magic and mystery, where the feminine faces that look from the wall are not those of real women but of the beloved "ethereal" dream faces. The landscapes are gloomy — of the dismal swamp — and no one, no one ever comes there — "The door is by no means wide." There "my sleeping friend," Poe's own half-drugged, perfumed soul lies forever dreaming, undisturbed by reality. The curtain cords "knot easily," and even the mirror is carefully placed so that from no ordinary position in the room can the inhabitant thereof catch a glimpse of his real physical self. Only the red rays of the lamp depending from the lofty ceiling on the golden chain, save it from the gloom of the sepulchre.

One can scarcely refrain now from smiling at all this, (the rococo taste, and the insane coloring) but the actual picture of the real room in which "our sleeping friend" lay *awake,* and the real trouble in the wide, sleepless eyes wipes the superior curl from our lips. And there is something more than this, too. Every time has its ideal abodes and favorite characters. These are perfectly, and always impossibly expressed for it by its artists, none of whom can completely escape the ideal longings of the world in which they move. Somehow or other, by the magic of personality and the accidents of circumstance, Edgar Allan Poe was able to embody for his contemporaries not only the fragile, spiritual beings which they hoped and played that they were, but also the very houses and rooms in which they longed to move.[535] The taste of the time was bad; its human ideals were exaggerated and impossible, but in Poe, through the magic of art, they were removed into the world of ideality and became the shadowy prototypes of his era. There, like all imponderable things, they remain, made permanent in time.

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[535] The ideal of the Victorian heroes and heroines seems to have been the creation of a completely masculine and feminine type. Much of the fiction of the Twentieth Century stresses the strange results of a mixture of the two types in one person, and the neurasthenic results. The effect upon the costume of the two

It was in Philadelphia, too, that Poe fully developed the last of his heroes to appear in prose. With the first intimations of a disintegrating mind, he began to console himself by imagining in himself the opposite.[536] Consequently the next dream-self which developed was the hero which he projected as the inhuman reasoner of the tales of ratiocination, the solver of puzzles, the unerring reader of cryptograms, the successful finder of treasure, and the detector of mysterious crimes. This hero was a new contribution to literature, and is, taken all in all, the most popularly successful of those which Poe created. There had been only a few hints of him before in Poe's writing, but in the Spring of 1839, if not earlier, Poe became definitely interested in the solutions of cryptograms, of which the mysterious hieroglyphs in *Arthur Gordon Pym* are perhaps an earlier symptom. In January (*sic*), 1840, he published in *Alexander's Weekly,* an obscure Philadelphia magazine, " a challenge to the world," in which he offered to solve any and all cryptograms submitted. As " the world " reached by Mr. Alexander consisted of a few hundred readers at most, Poe was successful in solving the few specimens sent in. As we shall see, the scheme was later repeated on a larger scale in *Graham's,* where Poe proved himself to be rather adept with ciphers.

Another obscure contribution of Poe, about this time, was the review of N. P. Willis's *Tortesa,* which appeared in the *Literary Examiner and Western Monthly Review* for July, 1839. This was a Pittsburgh publication, fathered by one E. Burke Fisher, a former contributor to the *Messenger* while Poe was editor, and a Mr. Whitney. Pittsburgh was largely devoid of any literary

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sexes, by these various ideals at different epochs provides a field for an interesting study.

[536] For a detailed account of this disintegrating process the reader must turn to the evidence in Chapter XXII and chapters following.

interest. Several local magazines had already been laid to rest in that locality, and the *Western Monthly Review* expired painlessly in August, 1839, without paying Poe, who has caused its editor to be faintly remembered by remarking, "No greater scamp ever walked." [537]

The personal doings of Poe and his family during the first six months of their stay in Philadelphia are mostly unrecorded. For his various contributions here and there in newspapers and magazines he received almost nothing. The financial panic was still on, and the wolf must have been seated before the door at Sixteenth near Locust Street, where the family seems to have remained until about the Fall of 1839.[538] Mrs. Clemm and Virginia are said to have resorted again to taking in sewing. Of boarders we hear nothing. There was probably little enough to divide among three. This now habitual stringency was relieved by the engagement of Poe for the part-time editing and contributing to *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine and American Monthly Review.* Just how Poe met Burton is not certain, possibly through Brooks or Wilmer, who were early contributors to *Burton's*. In April, Burton had reviewed *Arthur Gordon Pym* and handled it rather sarcastically. Despite that, the author soon after applied to the editor for employment and received this answer:

Philadelphia, *May* 10, 1839

EDGAR A. POE, *Esq.*:

MY DEAR SIR, — I have given your proposal a fair consideration. I wish to form some such engagement as that which you have proposed, and know of no one more likely to suit my views than yourself. The expenses of the Magazine are already awfully heavy; more so than my circulation warrants. I am certain that my expenditure exceeds that of any publications now extant, including the monthlies which are double in price. Competition is high — new claimants are daily arising.

Shall we say ten dollars per week for the remaining portion of the year. Should we remain together, which I see no reason to negative, your proposition shall be in force for 1840. A month's notice to be given on either side previous to a separation.

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[537] Poe to Dr. Snodgrass, Philadelphia, July 12, 1841. Dr. Thomas Ollive Mabbott says that there were probably two items that appeared in the *Western Monthly Review* about this time.

[538] Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, note 3, pages 34 and 35, notes the removal about this time, but ignores the Sixteenth Street residence.

Two hours a day except occasionally, will, I believe, be sufficient for all required except in the production of any article of your own. At all events you could easily find time for any other light avocation — supposing that you did not exercise your talents in behalf of any publications interfering with the prospect of the G.M.

I shall dine at home today at 3. If you will cut your mutton with me, good. If not, write or see me at your leisure.

I am, my dear Sir, your obedt. Servt.
W. E. Burton

Mr. Burton was an Englishman. There is something Pypsian in his invitation "to cut mutton," a phrase that at that time could scarcely have been lost on Poe. He, indeed, must often have thought with a sigh of the generous Virginia board set by Frances Allan, with all the foreign comestibles of John Allan's warehouse at her command. Doubtless at three o'clock on the Saturday afternoon of May 10, 1839, he sat across the table from burly Billie Burton, who looked like an apotheosis of John Bull himself, and doubtless discussed the future of the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the mutton, both at considerable length.

No one could talk more divinely than Poe, when the occasion was auspicious. In certain aspects, his conversation at times resembled that of Coleridge. But it was not often that he talked so, and when he did, alas, in America there was no Charles Lamb, no Keats, and no Haydon or Wordsworth before whom to pour forth the ambrosia from the arabesqued golden bowl of his dreams. Lowell could have been such a friend, but he was far away. What was said intimately between them was committed to paper and therefore dulled. For the most part this ethereal talk wasted itself upon the dull ears of a White, a Griswold, a Burton, or a Graham. Even they, however, remembered it, although it left them amazed. Ethereal conversation is the greatest gift of the gods. The gods of Ireland had bestowed it magnificently upon Poe — but there is always a fairy curse that goes with this gift; it vanishes instantly into thin air. Only Johnson possessed a Boswell. It would have been fortunate, amusing, exasperating, and mystifying, had someone so dogged Poe, for there were also occasions when he opened his lips with the same effect that at a more remote epoch was produced by opening the lid of Pandora's box.

Mr. Poe's arrangement with Mr. Burton was not unlike the contract which he had formerly made with Mr. White, and it commenced with the same salary — but there was one important reservation, at least on Poe's part. Mr. Poe was even then engaged in a scheme to start a magazine of his own, and he did not intend to sell himself so fully to his editor as upon a former occasion. He was simply to write *for* Mr. Burton, and when that gentleman soon afterward printed his name on the July number, the first to which Poe contributed, it is said to have led to their first misunderstanding. At any rate, Poe did not identify himself with *Burton's* to anything like the degree or in the same manner that he had with the *Messenger.*

The *Gentleman's Magazine,* to which Poe now found himself a contributor and, willy-nilly, an editor, had been founded in 1837 by William Evans Burton, an English comedian. Mr. Burton was a man of great practical ability and a deal of pretension. He claimed to be a graduate of St. Johns College, Cambridge (*sic*), and was not only desirous of being known as a comic actor and a manager, a career in which he had achieved some success, but was also covetous of literary fame in his adopted country. In his own words, *Burton's Magazine* was to be worthy of a place "upon the parlour table of every gentleman in the United States." To that end, he had seen fit to try a cast of the dice in the magazine field in the very midst of the financial panic, and it is no small compliment to his practical ability to chronicle the fact that he abundantly succeeded where others longer established in the same domain had failed. Joseph Jefferson has left us an excellent picture of the man.[539]

> Burton was thoughtful and saturnine . . . one of the funniest creatures that ever lived. . . . As an actor of the old broad farce comedy Mr. Burton had no equal in his day . . . 'Captain Cuttle,' and 'Micawber' were his great achievements; his face was a huge map on which was written every emotion that he felt. . . .

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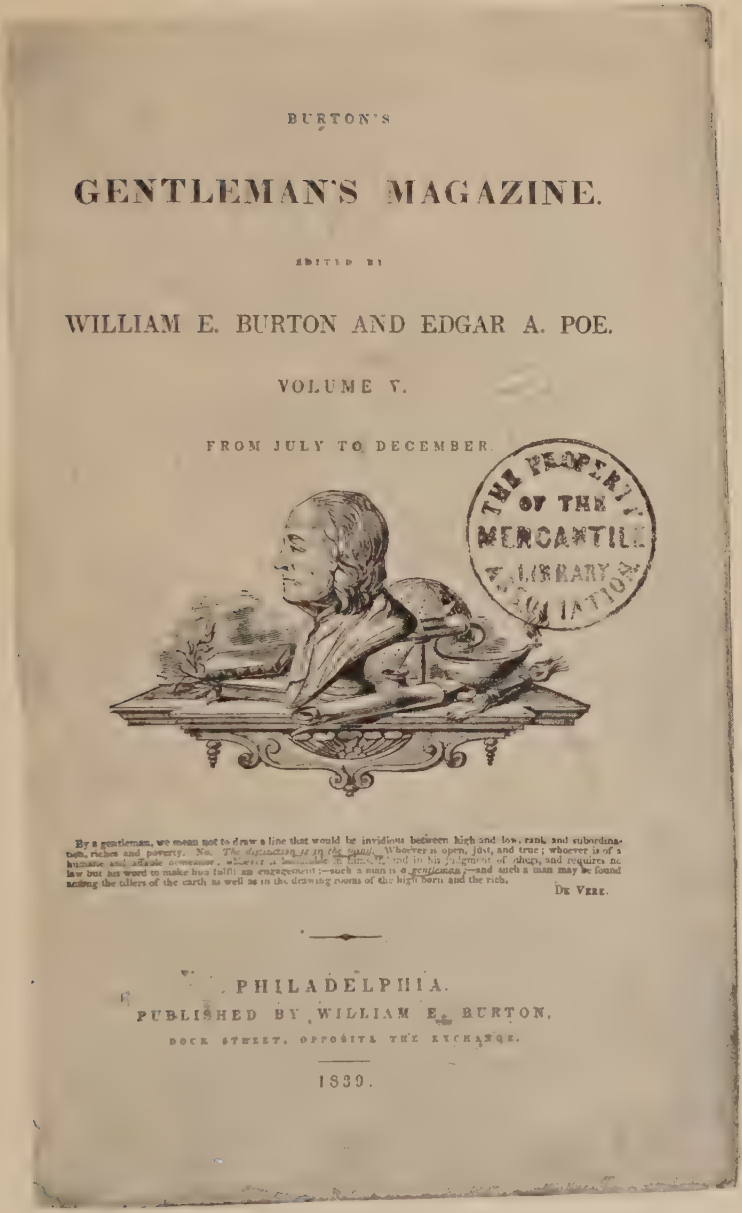
[539] *Autobiography of Joseph Jefferson,* the American actor, page 100.



BURTON'S

GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE.

EDITED BY

WILLIAM E. BURTON AND EDGAR A. POE.

VOLUME V.

FROM JULY TO DECEMBER.

THE PROPERTY OF THE MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

By a gentleman, we mean not to draw a line that would be invidious between high and low, rank and subordination, riches and poverty. No. *The distinction is in the mind.* Whoever is open, just, and true; whoever is of a humane and affable demeanour; whoever is honourable in himself, and in his judgment of others, and requires no law but his word to make him fulfil an engagement;—such a man is a *gentleman*;—and such a man may be found among the tillers of the earth as well as in the drawing rooms of the high born and the rich.

DE VERE.

PHILADELPHIA.
PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM E. BURTON,
DOCK STREET, OPPOSITE THE EXCHANGE.

1839.

Title Page of *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*
Showing Poe's name carried as Editor in July 1839
Courtesy of Maryland Historical Society

Some of these ill-concealed emotions Edgar Poe did not like. He could not, from the first, help despising that part of Burton's nature which he later described not inaccurately as the "buffoon."[540]

Mr. Burton was at first both owner and editor, and the magazine consequently partook somewhat of the rather stodgy nature of its father. The poems resembled heavy crusts of half-baked pies, while the stories were the lightest pastries imaginable. These, however, seem to have been relished by several thousand subscribers, mostly in Philadelphia, where the padding out of frills of translations and book reviews, obtained by a brutal use of the tailor's shears, was mistaken for the latest cut of literary fashion. Much of the "Quaker" following was due to the fact that Burton opened his pages generously to local poets and poetesses, novelists, and journalists. These in turn provided an enthusiastic *claque*. Neither the noise of their grateful applause nor the fervency of their contemporary din now annoys the ears of posterity. In addition to this, Mr. Burton also committed the then customary international burglary upon the literary effects of various British authors, among whom Leigh Hunt was the most famous. Such was the state of affairs when Mr. Poe appeared rather unwillingly upon the scene.

To come across Poe's work suddenly in *Burton's* is like finding a sonnet by Michelangelo in a bizarre scrapbook. To the August number, Poe contributed *The Man That Was Used Up;* in September, *The Fall of the House of Usher;* October and November saw *William Wilson* and *Morella* respectively; and the end of the year *The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion.* Besides this, there were several rather perfunctory book notices and some reprinted, but, as always, improved versions of formerly printed poems. *To Ianthe in Heaven* and *Spirits of the Dead* were an addition to his verse, the former of considerable merit.[541]

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[540] Poe to Snodgrass, April 1, 1841. See also Poe to Thomas, November 23, 1840, and Poe to Snodgrass, January 17, 1841, for further jibes at Burton's expense.

[541] A typical Poe legend is connected with the lines *To Ianthe.* In the Summer of 1838, Poe is said to have made a trip to Po Valley, Center County, Pennsylvania, where he engaged the affections of no less than two maidens, visited a cave,

The office of *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine,* irreverently referred to by Poe as the *Gent's Mag.,* was at Bank Alley and Dock Street, now Lodge and Dock. Just at this point Dock Street makes one of its wide, sweeping curves, and where Lodge Street joins it, there is a little rounded corner, in Poe's day covered by a canvas awning from the shop then located there. Under this he was occasionally to be seen loitering and talking. The classic front of the Exchange was just across the curve of Dock Street, then full of drays passing to and from the water front just below, and in the same vicinity along Front Street and the neighboring alleys, were located the printers', engravers', and binders' offices. Here Poe strolled about on various errands and was frequently seen in company with one Alexander, Mr. Burton's printer, English, and others. There were several newspapers published near by.

There were also frequent visits to Congress Hall for the mail of the magazine, and it was Poe's custom, on warm days, to sit dreaming or reading his letters on the benches under the shade trees in Independence Square, staring at the dark, stone walls of the great prison along Walnut Street. Then, too, one could always while away an afternoon at Mr. Sully's exhibitions of " ethereal paintings " just opposite the State House, perhaps remembering school days in Richmond with Robert Sully, the nephew of the painter, or talking to the artist himself, to whom Poe was known.[542]

By strolling through the arcade from Chestnut Street to La Fayette, with a few idle moments to spare, one could see the curiosities in Mr. Peal's collection in the long upper room where dances were frequently held, or examine the lines of stuffed birds in glass cases under the rows of paintings hung above them. Most intriguing of all was the skeleton of a mammoth partly restored

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carved his initials, and gave the original manuscript of *To Ianthe* to a young woman who was conveniently buried with the poem — and the proof. The hope of a legacy from some collateral relatives settled in Pennsylvania is said to have caused the trip. This is, of course, pure fiction. See *A Modern Petrarch* (*A Story of Alexander's Stream*). In *The Seven Mountains,* H. W. Shoemaker, Bright Printing Co., Reading, Pennsylvania, 1913.

[542] Thomas Sully painted a portrait of Poe in Philadelphia.

in plaster. It may possibly have been those very bones that inspired Hirst's remarkable poem on *The Coming of the Mammoth*, which Poe afterward reviewed, remarking, " Eight miles! " against the stanza in which Mr. Hirst, in the careless fervor of poetical license, makes the Mammoth jump across the Mississippi River.[543]

In addition to the Arcade, a curious structure with restaurants and shops downstairs, conceived by an eccentric architectural genius known as " Pagoda-Arcade Browne," there was also the Museum at Ninth and George Streets, with Nathan Dunn's Chinese collection upstairs. Here there was always something going on. In 1839, George Combe, " the eminent lecturer on the science of Phrenology," a science in which Mr. Poe was a dabbler, lectured to a small group of five hundred, while upstairs over two thousand people listened to the strains of Frank Johnston's famous negro brass band. It was the beginning of the age of pseudo-science and negro music. Both the pseudo-science and the strange rhythms intrigued Mr. Poe. He was particularly proud of the great " bump of ideality " that bulged upon his brow.

The theater was on Chestnut Street between Sixth and Seventh. The theatrical Mr. Burton no doubt occasionally arranged to take his young editor there, to see Edwin Forrest rant and tear, or home evenings to his own hospitable house at 158 North Ninth Street, where the dinners and suppers were ample; the guests, literary, dramatic, and convivial.

Poe, on his part, was at this time not imbibing. For several years past nothing more than water had passed his lips.[544] His virtue in one case was probably off-set and made possible by the use of a more subtle and even more fatal stimulant.[533]

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[543] Stan V. Henkels & Son, Philadelphia, Catalogue No. 1388, March 19, 1926. *The Coming of the Mammoth, The Funeral of Time, and Other Poems,* by Henry B. Hirst, Boston. Published by Phillips & Sampson, 1845. 12mo, original boards; printed label partly missing.

An autograph presentation copy: "To Edgar A. Poe, Esq., with the regards of his friend Hirst, June, 1845." Dr. Thomas Ollive Mabbott, in a letter dated New York, September 29, 1924, says this book has quite a number of annotations throughout in Poe's hand.

[544] Poe to Dr. Snodgrass, Philadelphia, April 1, 1841. Speaking of his experience with Burton, Poe says . . . " From the hour on which I first saw this basest of calumniators to the time in which I retired from his office . . . I pledge you, before God, the solemn word of a gentleman . . . *nothing stronger than water ever passed my lips* . . . *after* leaving Burton . . . I was induced to resort

The days with Burton, however, laid the basis for many lasting and important associations. One day in 1839, at the magazine office, he met a rather quizzical gentleman by the name of Thomas Dunn English, who describes Poe as being dressed in a black suit, well brushed, with very clean linen, rather an unusual thing then, apparently, for an editor. They walked down Chestnut Street together as far as Third, where English later on had his offices, writing drivel for a juvenile magazine called the *John Donkey*. They parted at that time both well pleased. The intimacy grew and finally led to later association in New York and a famous libel suit later on. In Philadelphia, English visited the Poes at home, where he described Mrs. Poe as a delicate gentlewoman and noticed that Mrs. Clemm was more of a mother than mother-in-law. Mr. English was by way of being a poet himself. He wrote a once famous old song called *Ben Bolt*, of lachrymose tendencies, and later introduced Poe to another young poet about town who was studying law. This was Henry Beck Hirst of *Mammoth* fame, of whom more hereafter.

All this time, nevertheless, Poe had not forgotten his scheme to launch a magazine of his own, the plans for which were rapidly maturing in his own head. Mr. Burton, on his part, was revolving further ventures into the dramatic field as a theater owner. His plan of a business activity took him frequently to New York. More and more of the routine work was thrust upon Poe, who was perhaps justified in feeling that the terms of agreement were being imposed upon. He was at times irregular, which exasperated Burton, and the first warmth of their mutual cordiality began to wane rapidly. By the end of the year they were both quite cool.

September, 1839, marked the beginning of a busy time for Poe after a less than usually productive period. He was now preparing for the appearance of his collected tales in two volumes, final

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to the occasional use of *cider*, with the hope of relieving a nervous attack. . . ." See Thomas's remark about Poe's use of cider, Chapter XXVI, page 558. Mrs. Clemm also bore testimony as to Poe's sobriety in the early Philadelphia days.

arrangement for the publication of which had been made about the end of the month, September 28, 1839, with Lea & Blanchard. The edition was to be at the risk of the publishers, and the author waived any claim for royalties unless the venture was successful.

Poe was very desirous of obtaining quotable criticisms for his work, to be used in inspired notices, and it was now that he began a rather extensive correspondence with literary friends and editorial acquaintances with that object in view. Such men as Washington Irving, James E. Heath, then editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger,* Philip Pendleton Cooke of Charlestown, Virginia, then an author of some note, and a Dr. J. Evans Snodgrass of Baltimore, associated for some time with Brooks on the *Museum,* an abolitionist, and a man of some local fame, were among those appealed to. The mass of these letters gives a rather intimate record of Poe's activities about this time, and shows him in touch with a wide range of literary personalities. In addition to this, they are an excellent example of how he smoothed the path for his own work by "soliciting criticisms," and spread the news of his publications by calling the attention of his various correspondents to favorable notices in current periodicals, quoting the encomiums of one man to another. The whole provides a rather interesting glimpse into the contemporary literary frog pond.

To Irving, Poe sent copies of *Burton's,* containing *The House of Usher* and *William Wilson,* as they appeared. Irving replied to both, and upon receipt of the latter tale wrote Poe:[545]

> I repeat what I have said in regard to a previous production, (*The House of Usher*), which you did me the favor to send me, that I cannot but think a series of articles of like style and merit would be extremely well received by the public.
>
> I could add for your private ear, that I think the last tale (*William Wilson*) much the best, in regard to style. It is simpler. In your first you have been too anxious to present your picture vividly to the eye, or too distrustful to your effect, and have laid on too much coloring. It is erring on the best side — the side of luxuriance. There is no danger of destroying its graphic effect which is powerful. . . .

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[545] Washington Irving to Poe, Newburgh, November 6, 1839.

Time has not confirmed Irving in his judgment. It has been the very graphic effect in *The House of Usher* which has caused it to be remembered where *William Wilson* is often forgotten.

The correspondence with P. P. Cooke largely concerned *Ligeia*. Cooke's letter is most charming and exhibits a Virginia gentleman enjoying to the full the life of his time.

> . . . My wife enticed me off to visit her kins-people in the country, and I saw more of guns and horses and dogs than of pens and paper. Amongst dinners, barbecues, snipe-shooting, riding parties, etc., I could not get my brains into humor for writing to you or to anybody else.[546]

He then follows with a long discussion of *Ligeia*. The letters between Poe and Cooke plainly develop the fact that in his prose tales Poe followed much the same method of reconstruction as in his poems, *i.e.*, the theme in one story was further developed and perfected in another of later date. In this case the fact is plainly brought out that *Morella* and its theme found its perfect and final expression in *Ligeia*, which Poe considered his best story.

The most intimate, indeed almost affectionate, correspondent at this time was Dr. J. E. Snodgrass.[547] The poet asks him many small favors, and confides in him to the extent of much pertinent small talk. In one letter in a postscript Poe says:

> P. S. I have made a profitable engagement with 'Blackwood's Mag': and my forthcoming *Tales* are promised a very commendatory review in that journal from the pen of Prof. Wilson. Keep this a secret, if you please, for the present.

At a later date Poe told Griswold that he had contributed to two foreign (English) magazines. These contributions have never been definitely traced, but it seems possible that certain articles bearing upon the question of international copyright, which afterward appeared in *Blackwood's* and the *Edinburgh Review*, may be by Poe, who was constantly fishing for English connections in several directions, then and later. To the correspondence with Heath of the *Messenger,* there will be occasion to refer later. In a letter to Snodgrass, at the end of October, Poe asks the Doctor to forward him, if possible, some back files of the *Messenger,* evidently with the idea of reprinting from them some of his redacted poetry which appeared later in *Burton's.*[548] He had neglected to keep by him, he soon afterward told Lowell, any volumes of any of his own poems.

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[546] P. P. Cooke to Poe September 16, 1839. Cooke writes from Charleston, Virginia, at that time one of the strongholds of Virginia plantation life at its best.

[547] Dr. James Evans Snodgrass of Baltimore had been one of the associates and contributors with Brooks on the *Museum*. These letters were in part published in the *New York Herald* for March 27, 1881. The more exact text appears in Woodberry. Harrison also includes them with a running comment.

Sometime towards the end of 1839 or the beginning of the new year, the time cannot be fixed exactly, Poe and his family moved from Sixteenth near Locust Street to a new dwelling on Coates Street just overlooking the banks of the Schuylkill River.[525] This was at the opposite end of town from the offices of *Burton's Magazine,* and entailed a walk of between two and three miles, unless the Chestnut Street stages were used, which, since 1829, had been running from the Coffee Houses on Front Street to the Schuylkill. If Poe walked, his route lay by the long gloomy walls of the Eastern Pennsylvania State Penitentiary, "large and imposing like the sight of a fortress." Past this reminder of misery — "the prisoners are all to be kept in solitary confinement . . . and the arched roofs reverberate every sound" — [365] the poet went back and forth between the town and his little house.

The dwelling is still standing (1926), a three-story brick house with a white worn doorstep, situated on a little triangle of ground made by the junction of Coates Street, Fairmount Drive, and an alley. This was by far the most comfortable house in which Poe had lived for any length of time since the Richmond days. The country all about, at that period, was open, with only a few buildings scattered here and there, and, although the railroad yards were near, where cars were then shifted by horses, there was a beautiful view up the river and across to the opposite bank.

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[548] Poe requests from Snodgrass especially No. 7, vol. I, to No. 6, vol. II, of the *Southern Literary Messenger.* He undoubtedly desired these to republish and revamp his old work in Richmond for Philadelphia publications. Snodgrass does not seem to have been able to supply these as Poe later, through Henry B. Hirst, borrowed several copies of the *S.L.M.* from William Duane, Secretary of the Treasury. These borrowed volumes gave rise to an unfortunate and mistaken charge against Poe by Duane. See Chapter XXIII, page 585. Also Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, appendix II.

Just below the house, on the river flat, was a curious structure known as the Pagoda which had been erected by Browne, the eccentric designer of the Arcade. Its Chinese proportions overlooked an abandoned race track, which had been part of Browne's scheme. Here some of the sporting gentlemen of Philadelphia could still be found, in high-wheeled racing carts, exercising their blooded nags and smart tandems. Just above the house was a high shot tower, for long a feature of the Philadelphia landscape. The house itself had two good rooms on the ground floor and several ample bedrooms above. Poe used the front parlor with a black slate mantel for his study, while the rear chamber appears to have been the dining-room; there being a cellar kitchen below, at that time. It was in the front rooms at Coates Street that most of the articles and stories which appeared in *Graham's* must have been written, and it is highly probable that it was here, too, that the first faint taps of the *Raven* began to be heard, and to be put down upon paper. In the bedroom upstairs, Poe lay ill for weeks at a time.[549]

The proximity to the river allowed Poe to indulge in the only form of physical exercise for which he cared, and it was from the time of moving into the Coates Street house that his interest in the landscape and the country about Philadelphia may be dated. There were, it appears, picnics and boating excursions up the Schuylkill and Wissahickon with occasional hunting trips. Some neighbors of the Poes, who lived in the Lemon Hill district, remembered a shooting expedition to Gray's Ferry in a rowboat after reed birds. Characteristically enough, the Virginian did the shooting while one of the Detwiler lads plied the oars. It was remembered that the mysterious looking gentleman made good use of his fowling-piece, and secured a good bag.[550]

Although the new " mansion " was to see Poe in the most pros-

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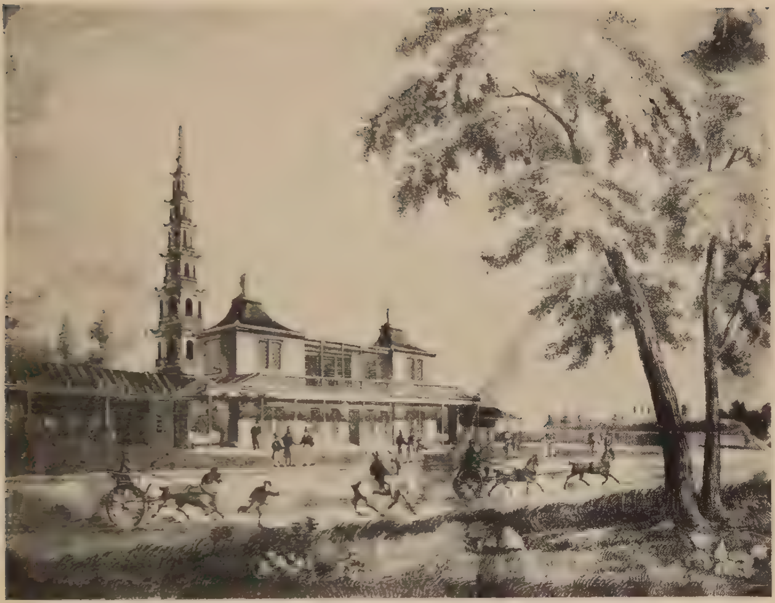
[549] Description from a visit made by the author to the Coates Street house in March, 1926.

[550] From an anonymous clipping. Contemporary records show the Detwilers to have been neighbors of the Poes in the " Lemon Hill " district.



The Pagoda

A pavilion and race track near Poe's Coates Street residence in Philadelphia, built by "Pagoda-Arcade" Brown, and a familiar sight to Poe and his family. Poe later on comments caustically on the "pagodas" of American architecture

From a contemporary drawing
Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Historical Society

Philadelphia in the 1840's

From an old print
Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Historical Society

perous days that he ever knew — those of his period as editor of *Graham's Magazine*, when, for a while, the howls of the wolf were succeeded by the notes of Virginia's little piano — the first few months in the residence at Coates Street were sad ones. The connection with *Burton's* was severed, and Mr. Graham had not yet employed Poe. It was a time of scarcity and living on hopes of prospects for the *Penn*. Even the three-cent postage for the circulars must have been hard to find, and they were often mailed in bundles to his friends for distribution. Nothing, however, ever kept the home from having about it a spotless, a neat, and an attractive air of comfort imparted by the incessant and loving labor of the mother-in-law, who was the mother of both her "children." If the walls were not hung in scarlet and gold, they were at least a complete refuge from the world. It was remarked that Mrs. Clemm kept no servant, but that Virginia was often seen working about the garden in front, where she raised fruit and flowers, while her widowed mother did the housework. The slightest patch of ground was always sufficient excuse for Virginia to provide her Eddie with a nosegay and a pot in the window. Poe had, by this time, become more than ever attached to her whose frail childlike person he had come to idolize and to confuse with the "Ligeia" of his dreams. It was not the full, hearty love of manhood for a healthy, competent woman, but a tenderness made poignant by a constantly increasing dread, a pity that longed to wrap her from sorrow and every care. Such a tenderness is often more enduring than passion. In the evenings she sang to him by the fire while Mrs. Clemm sewed; or he read to them, from his long rolls of perfectly written manuscript, some poem or weird tale in a voice that seemed to summon presences from the shadows,[551] while Catarina, the cat, then in her burgeoning kittenhood, purred on the ample plateau of Mrs. Clemm's lap.[552] But there were gloomy days, too, when Virginia was faint and ill, when Eddie was in the depths of melancholia, or in one of those fits of abstraction, utter lassitude, or even semi-madness induced by a drug. Then he would get up and wander off, God knows where, to be brought back raving by staring neighbors or cajoled by " Muddie." He would then collapse and lie for days helpless and despondent, half mad with remorse and exhaustion, upon the upstairs bed. Towards the end of 1839 those fits began to gain upon him. Finally he went into a nervous collapse. He was fighting off an old demon, and, as a compromise, began to drink hard cider.[544] These periods of absence from the magazine and the severity of some of Poe's criticism had evidently gone far towards complicating matters with Mr. Burton, for it was about this time that Poe seems to have attempted to sever connection with the *Gentleman's*, to have repented, and to have written the editor a despairing and supplicating letter. Mr. Burton replied. His letter is undated:

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[551] F. O. C. Darley, the artist, tells of Poe's reading the manuscripts of *The Gold Bug* and *The Black Cat* to him later. "The form of Poe's manuscripts was peculiar. He wrote on half sheets of note paper, which he pasted together at the ends, making one continuous piece, which he rolled up tightly. As he read he dropped it upon the floor. It was very neatly written and without corrections apparently." Darley to Woodberry, February, 1884.

> I am sorry you have thought it necessary to send me such a letter. Your troubles have given a morbid tone to your feelings which it is your duty to discourage. I myself have been as severely handled by the world as you can possibly have been, but my sufferings have not tinged my mind with melancholy, nor jaundiced my views of society. You must rouse your energies, and if care assail you, conquer it. I will gladly overlook the past. I hope you will as easily fulfill your pledges for the future. We shall agree very well, although I cannot permit the magazine to be made a vehicle for that sort of severity which you think ' so successful with the mob! ' . . . I accept your proposition to recommence your interrupted avocations with the *Maga*. Let us meet as if we had not exchanged letters. Use more exercise, write when feelings prompt, and be assured of my friendship. You will soon regain a healthy activity of mind and laugh at your past vagaries.[553]

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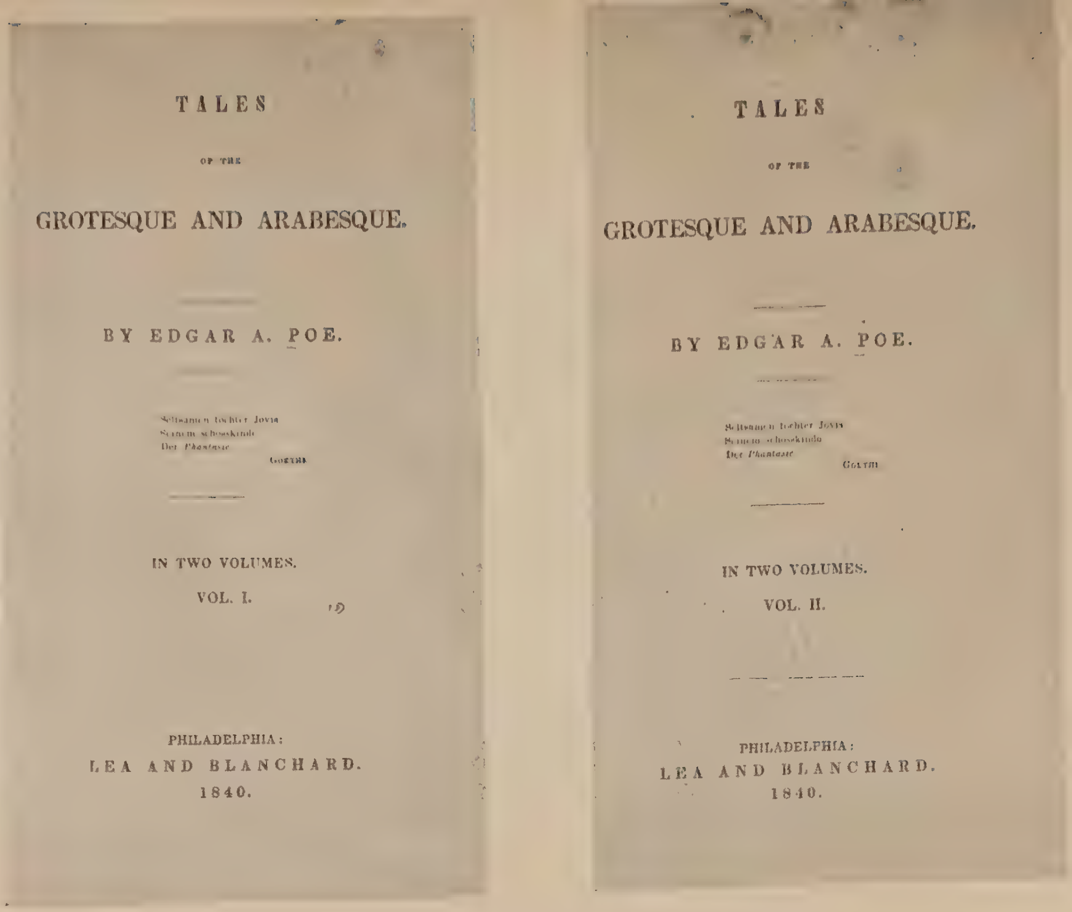
[552] This cat is mentioned by name in Poe's own letters to Mrs. Clemm, and afterward accompanied the family to New York where she was seen by visitors to the Fordham cottage, and specifically mentioned. See Poe to Mrs. Clemm, New York, April 7, 1884, page 582, and Chapter XXV, page 751.

[553] It will be remembered that both Mr. White of the *Messenger*, and Mr. Kennedy also advised exercise for Poe. This is a confirmation of Poe's sedentary and unhealthy mode of life, probably due to his lack of energy, a bad heart and poverty. He seems at times to have attempted to follow out the advice.



TALES

OF THE

GROTESQUE AND ARABESQUE.

BY EDGAR A. POE.

Seltsamen tochter Jovis
Seinem schosskinde
Der *Phantasie*.
Goethe.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:
LEA AND BLANCHARD.
1840.

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VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:
LEA AND BLANCHARD.
1840.

Title Pages of *Tales of Grotesque and Arabesque*

Philadelphia, December 1839

EDGAR ALLAN POE's sixth published book (2 *volumes*)

This is certainly charitable, thoughtful, and the advice is good, yet a glance at Mr. Burton's jolly comedian's countenance will at once explain his faith in the power of simple remedies to bring health and peace to a face that wore far different lineaments from his own. The truce, however, was arranged and Poe's contributions continued. He was now at work upon a serial story called *The Journal of Julius Rodman,* being an account of the "First Passage across the Rocky Mountains of North America ever achieved by Civilized Man."[554] The story appeared anonymously in *Burton's* from January to June of the following year (1840). This tale is perhaps the least worth while of any of Poe's longer works and resembles *Arthur Gordon Pym* in its method and style. The story professes to describe the adventures of a young Kentucky traveler on a trapping expedition up the Missouri in the last decade of the eighteenth century. The Rocky Mountains are crossed in 1792, and the hero returns to Virginia, where, for insufficient motives, he carefully secretes his diary. The interest in the West was then strong, and Poe was simply writing for an audience. The narratives of Lewis and Clark, Sir A. Mackenzie, and Washington Irving's *Astoria* were the sources drawn upon.[555] It is only occasionally, in this tale, that Poe attains to a faint glow of his better self. In the meantime, the last month of the year finally saw the publication of the collected tales an accomplished fact at last.

Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque, the seventh work appearing under Poe's name, was published in December, 1839, at Philadelphia by Lea & Blanchard, the title page bearing the date 1840. The edition consisted of 750 sets of two volumes each, and was dedicated to Colonel William Drayton. The first volume of 243 pages contained a preface in which Poe strove to counter the charge of German influence, and to lay stress on the fact that the collection possessed a spiritual coherence, having been written with a view to publication in collected form "to preserve, as far as a certain point, a certain unity of design." This was followed by fourteen tales. The second volume contained ten stories and an appendix. In the *Foreign Quarterly Review* for July, 1827, appeared an article by Sir Walter Scott which suggested the title.[556] This comprised a collection of all the tales published up until that time with the addition of *Why the Little Frenchman Wears His Hand in a Sling*.[557] In them, all the types of the heroes and heroines which Poe was to create, appeared fully developed except that of the "Unerring Reasoner." That was to await the tales of ratiocination soon to follow.

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[554] First traced by Ingram, Poe's English biographer.

[555] *Astoria,* Washington Irving, Philadelphia, two volumes, 1836. A narrative deduced from the fur trading records of the Northwest and John Jacob Astor's ventures and adventures. An important piece of Americana. Poe's use of sources, contrasted with Irving's method, is apparent here.

Poe had now been for a year and a half in Philadelphia. He had made many valuable acquaintances and increased his fame. . . . The year 1839 closed having seen two works issued under his name, and the publication of some of the greatest of his tales. The financial return had been almost nothing, and he was now once more despondent. In addition to this, the troubles with Burton were rapidly drifting to a close.

The opening of the year 1840 found Israfel with several irons very much in the fire. He was still contributing perfunctorily to *Burton's*, but his main interest was now engrossed in the grand scheme to launch a magazine of his own, of which he was to be sole editor and proprietor. As he had no capital, his campaign for starting the journal, to be called the *Penn Magazine*, was pressed along three separate lines, *i.e.*, the favorable announcement of its approaching advent by other publications, the securing of distinguished contributors, each with his own following, and the assurance of sufficient subscribers, in advance, to provide the initial financial backing.

For the securing of all three essentials, Poe relied perforce upon the coöperation and confidence of his personal and literary friends. His correspondence at this time is almost entirely given over to matters concerning the *Penn*, and for the most part embraced the members of his own family in Baltimore, old friends in Richmond, correspondents in the West, particularly St. Louis, and various magazine editors upon whose fear or favor he might safely rely. John Tomlin of Tennessee, Dr. Thomas Holley Chivers of Georgia, both poets, and Frederick William Thomas were now added to the list.

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[556] Woodberry, 1909, vol. I, page 223, note 1.

[557] Published in the *Broadway Journal*, November 9, 1845. See also Chapter V, page 75, for the source of this story.

Poe had met Tomlin through magazine correspondence at an earlier date. Chivers had already published poems which had attracted Poe's notice, and the correspondence which now sprang up between them was the beginning of an association which later had curious ramifications in their mutual effect upon each other's poetry. Thomas was a poet and novelist, the author of *Clinton Bradshaw, Howard Pinckney, East and West,* and other forgotten works. He was also a minor journalist and dabbled not unsuccessfully in politics. At the time their correspondence began, Thomas was living in St. Louis. Through Baltimore connections, he already knew of Poe and was prepared to admire him. It was the beginning of the closest friendship which Poe contracted during his manhood.[558]

Poe's theory of issuing a magazine of his own was, that once rid of the thwarting influence of an editor such as Mr. White or Mr. Burton, and with the policies of the magazine entirely in his own hands, he would be able to appeal to a larger and, at the same time, more select audience by the fearlessness of the criticism and the quality of the contributions offered. In this connection, Lowell's description of the literary conditions in the United States a few years later was equally applicable to 1840.

> The situation of American literature is anomalous. It has no center, or, if it have, it is like that of the sphere of Hermes. It is divided into many systems, each revolving round its several suns, and often presenting to the rest only the faint glimmer of a milk-and-water way.[559]

In 1840, and for some years later, these several centers may be said to have been located at Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. The West was nebulous and the faint glow at Charleston, which became visible just before the Civil War with the issue of *Russell's Magazine* there, had not yet troubled the horizon.

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[558] For a full history of Thomas see Appendix III.

[559] Lowell's sketch of Poe, *Graham's Magazine*, February, 1845.

It was Poe's plan to disregard all of these local groups with their mutual and petty internal jealousies, and to found a periodical which would not only be national, but even international in its scope.

Unlike nearly all the other editors and critics of his time, Poe was aware of the movements and the orbits of stars in both English and German literature. There were only two magazines in the country that would have been rivals — the *North American Review* and the *Knickerbocker,* which represented the New England and the Manhattan groups respectively. Towards the former, with the exception of James Russell Lowell, Poe was peculiarly hostile. Part of this hostility to New England was due to personal jealousy and Southern traditions, but the major part of it can now candidly be acknowledged to have had its source in a just anger at the preposterous assumptions of the New England group and their clannish log rolling. To a man of Poe's critical acumen and artistic instinct, this was like a red rag to a bull. The assumption of the superiority of the New England brand of culture and virtue has been swallowed by the American people with an ease that is only to be explained by their almost complete indifference to the facts of their own history, and an admiration for persistent propaganda. To Poe, raised in Virginia, and a member of Thomas Jefferson's own university, the assumption was intolerable. Nor is the fact unimportant in Poe's history. Through its curious ramifications, his reputation has suffered. The Puritan has withdrawn the fringes of his robes lest they take stain from the contact; Emerson called him the "jingle man," and went on cogitating "Compensations"; and Longfellow, the carefully bibulous and benign, assumed the throne in solitary state, where he has reigned for two generations as the greatest American poet. In the meantime, every schoolboy learned that Edgar Poe was a drunkard, and the faintly heard echoes of Baudelaire's twisted horn confirmed from France the certainty that he was "immoral." In the United States he became the *enfant terrible* of

American literature, and abroad one of the two "world artists" we have produced.

In 1840, Poe was hoping to give a center and an intellectual direction to the current in the muddy swimming hole of American literature. It is a great pity that he failed. Artistically he was the foremost creative mind of his literary generation in America; in the final analysis it was his physical infirmities which doomed him to fail. Poe's own prospectus for the *Penn*, which was circulated about a year later (he probably delighted in the pun on the name), gives most satisfactorily the basis upon which he built his hopes. Naturally enough, the complete philosophy behind it is not fully developed in a document whose aim was so practical as the

Prospectus
of
THE PENN MAGAZINE
A Monthly Literary Journal

To be edited and published in the city of Philadelphia
By EDGAR A. POE

To The Public: — Since resigning the conduct of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, at the commencement of its third year, I have always had in view the establishment of a Magazine which should retain some of the chief features of that journal, abandoning or greatly modifying the rest. Delay, however, has been occasioned by a variety of causes, and not until now have I found myself at liberty to attempt the execution of the design.

I will be pardoned for speaking more directly of the *Messenger*. Having in it no proprietary right, my objects too being at variance in many respects with those of its very worthy owner, I found difficulty in stamping upon its pages that *individuality* which I believe essential to the full success of all similar publications. In regard to their permanent influence, it appears to me that a continuous definite character, and a marked certainty of purpose, are requisites of vital importance; and I cannot help believing that these requisites are only attainable when one mind alone has the general direction of the undertaking. Experience has rendered obvious — what might indeed have been demonstrated *a priori* — that in founding a Magazine of my own lies my sole chance of carrying out to completion whatever peculiar intentions I may have entertained.

To those who remember the early days of the Southern periodical in question, it will be scarcely necessary to say that its main feature was a somewhat overdone causticity in its department of Critical Notices of new books. The *Penn Magazine* will retain this trait of severity insomuch only as the calmest yet sternest sense of justice will permit. Some years since elapsed may have mellowed down the petulance without interfering with the vigor of the critic. Most surely they have not yet taught him to read through the medium of a publisher's will, nor convinced him that the interests of letters are unallied with the interests of truth. It shall be the first and the chief purpose of the Magazine now proposed to become known as one where may be found at all times, and upon all subjects, an honest and a fearless opinion. It shall be a leading object to assert in precept, and to maintain in practice, the rights, while in effect it demonstrates the advantages, of an absolutely independent criticism; a criticism self-sustained; guiding itself only by the purest rules of Art; analyzing and urging these rules as it applies therein; holding itself aloof from all personal bias; acknowledging no fear save that of outraging the right; yielding no point either to the vanity of the author, or to the assumptions of critical prejudice, or to the involute and anonymous cant of the Quarterlies, or to the arrogance of those organized *cliques* which, hanging like nightmares upon American literature, manufacture, at the nod of our principal booksellers, a pseudo-public opinion by wholesale. These are objects of which no man need be ashamed. They are purposes, moreover, whose novelty at least will give them interest. For assurance that I will fulfill them in the best spirit and to the very letter, I appeal with confidence to those friends, and especially to those Southern friends, who sustained me in the *Messenger,* where I had but a very partial opportunity of completing my own plans.

In respect to the other characteristics of the *Penn Magazine* a few words here will suffice.

It will endeavor to support the general interests of the republic of letters, without reference to particular regions — regarding the world at large as the true audience of the author. Beyond the precincts of literature, properly so called, it will leave in better hands the task of instruction upon all matters of *very* grave moment. Its aim chiefly shall be *to please* — and this through means of versatility, originality, and pungency. It may be as well here to observe that nothing said in this Prospectus should be construed into a design of sullying the Magazine with any tincture of the buffoonery, scurrility, or profanity, which are the blemish of some of the most vigorous of the European prints. In all branches of the literary department, the best aid, from the highest and purest sources, is secured.

To the mechanical execution of the work the greatest attention will be given which such a matter can require. In this respect it is proposed to surpass, by very much, the ordinary Magazine style. The form will somewhat resemble that of the *Knickerbocker;* the paper will be equal to that of the *North American Review;* pictorial embellishments are promised only in the necessary illustration of the text.

The *Penn Magazine* will be published in Philadelphia, on the first of each month; and will form, half-yearly, a volume of about 500 pages. The price will be $5 per annum, payable in advance, or upon receipt of the first number, which will be issued on the first of March, 1841. Letters addressed to the Editor and Proprietor,

EDGAR A. POE

Philadelphia, *January* 1, 1841

In this prospectus for the *Penn,* somewhat toned down for popular consumption, we have, in a thimble, the outstanding critical and publishing theories of Poe, *i.e.,* his insistence that the unity of a vivid personality would impel success, his purpose to criticize without fear or favor, a refusal to pander to local prejudices or sectional cliques, the theory of the world as an audience, a freedom from didactic tendencies and ephemeral propaganda, pleasure as the aim of literature, the avoidance of the profane or the erotic, and a format which relied on good printing and legitimate illustration of the text rather than upon sentimental embellishment. The theory was fairly sound, but it is an open question whether, if financial circumstances had permitted it, the personality of the " Editor and Proprietor " would have allowed him, particularly in the realm of criticism, to have carried it wholly into effect. He too had peculiar prejudices and particular friends.

The responses to Poe's appeals by correspondence were on the whole rather reassuring. Promises of support by subscribers, and of articles from various literary friends accumulated encouragingly, and it seemed for a while as if the *Penn* might actually appear in January, 1841, as an announcement in the *Philadelphia Saturday Chronicle* for June 13, 1840, indicated. A series of unforeseen events, and an unlooked-for change in Poe's prospects, now, however, suddenly intervened, and the date of the first appearance of the magazine was deferred. These events were a nervous crisis, a final quarrel with Burton, and the absorption of Poe in his work as the editor of another important periodical.

Through the latter part of the Winter and the early Spring of

1840, Poe had continued his work with Mr. Burton, although unwillingly. Their growing tension was now made even more tense by a scheme of prizes which Burton began to offer under the guise of " premiums," sums which Poe said Burton never intended to pay. It was a method of obtaining authors' manuscripts, by dangling a precarious bait before their eyes, which disgusted Poe. He is said to have protested to Burton, but in vain.

Also about this time, the proprietor of the *Gentleman's* began to become more interested in his theatrical than in his journalistic ventures, and quietly commenced to negotiate for the sale of the magazine without saying anything to Poe. Poe on his part was conducting his negotiations for the *Penn* without saying anything to Burton, when about the same time, apparently, the news of the several private activities of each came to both their ears. Poe is said to have availed himself of Burton's lists for the *Penn,* but as many of the subscribers and contributors had been obtained by his own efforts, the charge against him is not clear. Poe's irregularities and fitfulness were doubtless irritating, on the other hand he had been ill. As usual there was much to be said, on all sides, when the final break came. Burton's quarrels with various theatrical managers had determined him to buy a theater of his own, and he now, without saying anything to Poe, advertised the magazine for sale. It was then, perhaps, when he attempted to remonstrate with his editor about the lists, that Poe told him that he " looked upon him as a blackguard and a villain." In addition to all this, Burton had been absent from the magazine offices on theatrical business quite frequently. In February, he is known to have been in New York. This threw a double burden upon Poe, who became tired of the whole thing, and upon one of these occasions made his attitude in the matter clear by staying away himself. The final *dénouement* is graphically given by one of Poe's friends, a Mr. Rosenbach, whose father was interested in the magazine. On returning, Mr. Burton opened the office door to find the desk piled high with manuscripts and letters, Poe absent, and the layout for the next number unprepared:

> Burton immediately sought my father at his house, and it was about midnight when he found him. He came in a carriage with a large

bundle of manuscripts, from which they made selection. They worked until morning when they sent me with copy to the printer, Charles Alexander, in Franklin Place, Chestnut Street. Alexander hunted up some extra compositors, and by dint of hard work and hurried proof-reading, the *Gentleman's Magazine* appeared as usual. Poe was discharged for his negligence. . . .[560]

One can imagine the roast-beef tinge of the comedian-editor's countenance as he arrived at Mr. Rosenbach's about midnight, "in a carriage piled high with manuscripts." And of the remarks anent Mr. Poe as "some selection was made" — frantically — under the rays of the astral lamp while dawn slowly paled into morning. For some time afterward, both Mr. Burton and Mr. Poe were heard by mutual acquaintances to be indulging themselves in libelous asides at each other's expense. After this affair, which occurred sometime in the Spring of 1840, Poe did not again appear at the office of the *Gent's Mag*. There were, however, a number of personal matters left in the air by his withdrawal, about which Burton addressed a letter to Poe at the end of May. The nature of these, and the state of the controversy can best be understood by giving Poe's carefully pondered reply:

SIR, — I find myself at leisure this Monday morning, June 1, to notice your very singular letter of Saturday. . . . I have followed the example of Victorine and slept upon the matter and you shall now hear what I have to say. In the first place, your attempts to bully me excite in my mind scarcely any other sentiment than mirth. When you address me again, preserve if you can, the dignity of a gentleman. . . . As for the rest you do me great injustice and you know it. As usual, you have wrought yourself into a passion with me on account of some imaginary wrong; for no real injury, or attempt at injury, have you ever received at my hands. As I live, I am utterly unable to say why you are angry, or what true grounds of complaint you have against me. You are a man of impulses; have made yourself, in consequence, some enemies; have been in many respects ill-treated by those whom you looked upon as friends — and these things have rendered you suspicious. You once wrote in your magazine a sharp critique upon a book of mine — a very silly book — *Pym*. Had I written a similar criticism upon a book of yours, you feel that you would have been my enemy for life, and you therefore imagine in my bosom a latent hostility towards yourself. This has been a mainspring in your whole conduct towards me since our first acquaintance. It has acted to prevent all cordiality. In a general view of human nature your idea is just — but you will find yourself puzzled in judging me by ordinary motives. Your criticism was essentially correct, and therefore, although severe, it did not occasion in me one solitary emotion either of anger or dislike. But even while I write these words, I am sure you will not believe them. Did I not still think you, in spite of the exceeding littleness of some of your hurried actions, a man of many honorable impulses, I should not now take the trouble to send you this letter. I cannot permit myself to suppose that you would say to me in cold blood what you said in your letter of yesterday. You are, of course, only mistaken in asserting that I owe you a hundred dollars, and you will rectify the mistake at once when you come to look at your accounts. . . . Your error can be shown by reference to the Magazine. During my year with you I have written:

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[560] See also Alexander to Clarke, October 20, 1850, *Gill*, page 97. "The absence of the editor on professional duties left the matter frequently in the hands of Mr. Poe, whose unfortunate failing may have occasioned some disappointment in the preparation of a particular article expected from *him*, but never interfering with the regular publication of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, as its monthly issue was never interrupted upon any occasion, either from Mr. Poe's deficiency, or from any other cause, during my publication of it, embracing the whole of Mr. Poe's connection with it. . . ." This somewhat conflicting testimony is given here as a matter of justice.

In	July	5 pp.	
“	August	9 pp.	
“	September	16 pp.	
“	Oct.	4 pp.	
“	Nov.	5 pp.	
“	Dec.	12 pp.	
“	Jan.	9 pp.	
“	Feb.	12 pp.	
“	March	11 pp.	
“	April	17 pp.	
“	May	14 pp.	+ 5 copied — Miss McMichael's Ms.
“	June	9 pp.	+ 3 “ — Chandlers
		132	(*An error in addition*)

Dividing this sum by 12, we have an average of 11 pp. per month — not 2 or 3. And this estimate leaves out of question everything in the way of extract or compilation. Nothing is counted but *bona fide* composition. 11 pp. at $3 per p. would be $33, at the usual Magazine prices. Deduct this from $50, my monthly salary, and we have left $17 per month, or $4.25 per week, for the services of proof reading; general superintendence at the printing office; reading, alteration, and preparation of Mss., with compilation of various articles, such as Plate articles, Field sports, etc. Neither has anything been said of my name upon your title page, a small item — you will say — but still something, as you know. Snowden pays his editresses $2 per week each for their names solely. Upon the whole I am not willing to admit that you have greatly overpaid me. That I did not do four times as much as I did for the Magazine was your own fault. At first I wrote long articles, which you deemed unadmissable, and never did I suggest any to which you had not some immediate and decided objection. Of course, I grew discouraged, and could feel no interest in the journal.

I am at a loss to know why you call me selfish. If you mean that I borrowed money of you — you know that you offered it, and you know that I am poor. . . . Place yourself in my situation and see whether you would not have acted as I have done. You first ' enforced,' as you say, a deduction of salary; giving me to understand thereby that you thought of parting company. You next spoke disrespectfully of me behind my back — this as an habitual thing; — to those whom you supposed your friends, and who punctually reported to me, as a matter of course, every ill-natured word which you uttered. Lastly, you advertised your magazine for sale without saying a word to me about it. I felt no anger at what you did — none in the world. Had I not firmly believed in your design to give up your journal, with a view of attending to the Theatre, I should never have dreamed of attempting one of my own. The opportunity of doing something for myself seemed a good one — (and I was about to be thrown out of business) — and I embraced it. Now I ask you, as a man of honor and as a man of sense, — what is there wrong in all this? What have I done at which you have any right to take offence? I can give you no definite answer (respecting the continuance of *Rodman's Journal*) until I hear from you again. The charge of $100 I shall not admit for an instant. If you persist in it our intercourse is at an end, and we can each adopt our own measures. In the meantime, I am,

Yr. Obt. St.,
EDGAR A. POE

To have admitted the charge of $100, which was more than he actually did owe Burton, would have necessitated the continuance of the *Rodman Journal* for nothing at all. Mr. Burton, who had several manuscripts of Poe's on hand, refused to publish them, and also annoyed Poe by pretending not to be able to find the manuscripts sent in to the magazine by several of his former contributors. About the middle of June, Poe wrote to Snodgrass saying:

> I would go down to the office, open the drawer in his presence, and take the MS. from beneath his nose. I think this would be a good deed done, and would act as a caution to such literary swindlers in the future. . . .[561]

Even as late as April, 1841, Poe again writes:

> In regard to Burton I feel indebted to you for the kind interest you express; but scarcely know how to reply. My situation is embarrassing. It is impossible, as you say, to notice a buffoon and a felon, as one gentleman would notice another. The law, then is my only recourse. . . .[540]

Poe felt that he was being libelled. But nothing came of his talk of the law, and both he and Burton gradually cooled off. Burton's " libels " had to do with assertions on his part that Poe's irregularities and idiosyncrasies, while employed on the *Gentleman's Magazine,* were due to drinking. Mr. Burton was mistaken, but honestly so. Poe had, indeed, been wayward and fitful, but as will be shown shortly, he was not drinking at this time.[544] His eccentricities arose from another source. The *Penn Magazine* project may be regarded as having caused the main trouble with Burton, as it did later on with Graham.

In the meantime, in May, 1840, Poe had met personally, and became in a few days intimately acquainted with, his lifelong friend, F. W. Thomas, who had stopped off at Philadelphia on his way home to St. Louis from the Whig presidential convention held in Baltimore the same month.[558] Thomas visited the Poes at Coates Street where the family was still living. They were all much taken with one another. Thomas was especially delighted with Virginia and Mrs. Clemm, and evidently won his way to the heart of Poe, who afterward mentions his conversation turning frequently " upon the one loved name." It was Frances, the name of Poe's beloved foster-mother.[562]

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[561] Poe to Snodgrass, Philadelphia, June 17 (1840). This is a characteristic Poe letter full of bluster. After calling Burton many hard names he became friends with him a year or so later.

[562] Thomas was referring to his sister Frances. This remark of Poe's is peculiarly significant as showing how strongly he cherished the memory of his foster-mother. Thomas to Poe August 3, 1841, " I remarked one day to my sister *Frances* . . ." etc.

There were many associations which drew these two young men together. In the first place both were writers, poets, and editors; both had been raised in the South and had known of each other through mutual friends for a long time. Thomas, like Poe, suffered from ill health. He was a cripple, probably due to tuberculosis of the bones, and his struggles for recognition had been long and hard. In Baltimore, while Poe was in the Army, Thomas had known Poe's brother Henry well, and they had been rivals in a love affair.[563] It was then that he had first learned of Poe and his work. Poe had been especially interested in Thomas's novel, *Clinton Bradshaw,* because it depicted persons then living in Baltimore, whom he knew. In Philadelphia, both of them became intensely interested in each other. There were long conversations upon poetry and other literary topics. Poe gave Thomas much good advice about style and method in novel writing, and the evenings at Coates Street were enlivened by Virginia's singing in her sweet, high voice one of Thomas's songs, *It is said that "Absence Conquers Love."* Thomas loved this composition and once, when in Philadelphia, ill and in hard luck, he had stopped in front of a house on Chestnut Street to listen to a lady's voice singing a familiar tune — it was his own song.

While in Philadelphia in May, 1840, Thomas made a speech for "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" — and was pelted by a mob of the Locofocoes. The young politician was a lawyer and a personal admirer of the Whig candidate —

> One of the first persons who noticed me in the West was General Harrison, who shortly after my arrival in Cincinnati invited me to the 'Bend,' where I went and was his guest for some weeks, — I was engaged there in one of my first law cases against his eldest son (now dead), William Harrison.[563]

It is impossible now, almost a century later, to recall to the present generation the fervency of the presidential campaign of 1840. It marked the beginnings of the insurgence of the idealism and the hopes which two decades later placed Abraham Lincoln in the White House. It was a progressive movement that centered itself about Harrison, a rather futile old military hero, but it was pregnant with the energy and lyric enthusiasm of youth. The Whigs were a young man's party and the campaign marked a departure from old-time methods. There were torchlight processions, speeches by young madcaps in oil-cloth cloaks, glistening with the reflections of rockets and red fire, and, above all, the sound of young, manly voices raised in a national enthusiasm of song while the barbecued ox sizzled before some great bonfire in the prim public squares. Both Poe and Thomas felt the breeze raised by the passing wings of the angel of youth and both wrote political songs. " I battled with right good will for Harrison," says Poe.[564] Thomas was later rewarded with a public office, the benefits of which he tried hard to obtain for Poe. They both met at a time of considerable spiritual enthusiasm, and forever remained firm friends. Most of the biographies of Poe have overlooked the great friendship of Poe's later years. It was a fine one. Their conversation and correspondence were affectionate, and their rare times together fondly cherished. Those who assert that Poe was incapable of true friendship must explain away the contrary evidence of these sometimes touching letters. " You have shown yourself, from the first hour of our acquaintance, that *rara avis in terris* — a true friend. Nor am I the man to be unmindful of your kindness." [565] Poe on his part did many literary favors for Thomas.

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[563] Thomas to Poe, Washington, August 3, 1841. An autobiographical letter viewing. Full text in Griswold collection. See note 145. See "Poe and Thomas," Appendix.

Poe's resources, already of the scantiest, were reduced to nil after his parting with Burton. The last of his contributions to the *Gentleman's* ceased in June, 1840. During the past six months his most important critical contributions had been a highly appreciative critique of De la Motte Fouqué's *Undine,* the effect of which is largely overcome by finding the same critic praising, *ad nauseam,* Moore's *Alciphron.* From old association Poe was more than partial to Moore, who had a contemporary reputation now difficult to understand. Poe had also found opportunity to take Longfellow to task for bungling in *Hyperion,* when the stuff of his poem gave him, Longfellow, a great artistic opportunity. Longfellow's treatment of *Hyperion* was more personal and autobiographical than Poe knew, and dealt with the events of the death of his first wife and his second marriage.

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[564] Poe to Thomas, August 26, 1841. Undated by Stoddard. The date comes from Thomas's reply of July 1, 1841. Thomas's father was also an active Whig, see Appendix.

[565] Poe to Thomas, May 25, 1842.

With the advent of Summer, however, Poe's opportunities for publishing were, as we have seen, withdrawn. His contributions from June, 1840, to January, 1841, when he began to write for *Graham's,* were mostly fugitive and certainly obscure. Some went to the Philadelphia newspapers, *Alexander's Weekly Messenger,* to the editor of which he was already known since the cryptogram articles, and a few paragraphs to the *United States Military Magazine.* This comprehended the extent of his publishing until December, 1840.

The rest of the time was taken up by his correspondence concerning the *Penn,* his supervision of the printing and mailing out of the prospectus already noticed, dated January 1, 1841. It was during this interlude that he approached his cousin, William Poe of Baltimore, with an appeal for aid in his venture. The paucity of his work at this time may also be attributed to the approach, through the Fall of 1840, of the sickness which confined him to bed in the December and January following. After the flare-up with Burton there had been a well authenticated nervous collapse. Which was the cause, and which the effect, it is impossible to ascertain. The ramifications and implications are various.

Suffice it to say, that Poe was far from a well man in heart, brain, or nerves. To this condition was now added the additional strain of no occupation with a consequent return of dire poverty. Once more, for a brief period, his entire support was Mrs. Clemm. In addition to supplying the larder by some beggar's magic, she also nursed both Poe and Virginia. In the Summer, she had received a temporary respite by an absence from Philadelphia " on a six weeks' visit to New Jersey," perhaps to Mary Devereaux, who was then married and living in Jersey City.

In October, 1840, Burton succeeded in selling the *Gentleman's*

Magazine outright for $3,500 to George R. Graham, the owner of *Atkinson's Casket,* an anæmic monthly that had then fluttered harmlessly through ten puerile volumes. Mr. Burton sold out his literary aspirations and used the cash to purchase Cook's Olympic Circus, between Eighth and Ninth Streets in Philadelphia, where he now once more appeared in his true character as manager and chief clown. Graham was thus left in sole charge of both magazines which he continued separately, up until the new year, when their destines and identities were merged in a new publication called *Graham's Magazine.* Mr. Burton, at the time of the merger, a process lamentably familiar to the readers of modern American periodicals, boasted 3500 subscribers, and Mr. Graham, 1500. The new magazine therefore started with about 5000 for its audience. In a few months it had increased under Poe's editing to over 37,000. It was the largest monthly in the world, the first of the huge modern American magazines. The inference from these figures speaks loudly for Poe. It was then an unprecedented triumph in the field of journalism.

Graham's Monthly, in some of its respects, may be compared with the present *Saturday Evening Post,* or the *Ladies Home Journal.* It aimed to appeal to a large audience of both sexes of the middle classes, and it succeeded. Strangely enough, Mr. Graham was at that time a part owner in the contemporary *Saturday Evening Post.* In some respects, except for the fact that he was extravagant and died in poverty, George R. Graham was the Curtis or the Munsey of his time. Behind his first success was the able editor Edgar Allan Poe, for whom, after all, Burton, it appeared, had deep in his heart a real liking. When the negotiations for the sale of the *Gentleman's* were completed, Burton turned to Graham and remarked, "There is one thing more, I want you to take care of my young editor." It was one of the most telling and kindly lines that actor ever spoke. Sometime between October and December, 1840, Mr. Graham came into contact with Poe, for in the last number of the *Gentleman's* under Graham's management, appeared Poe's remarkable tale of conscience, *The Man of the Crowd.* It is a curious combination of a "hero" under the effect of remorse for crime, and the scenes of

London which Poe recollected from his sojourn there with the Allans, now grotesquely recalled through the cloud and pall of a dream.

From the blank of the remaining months of the year, only a few glimpses can be snatched. The hunt for a legacy was still on; the old one of William Clemm, Sr., Virginia's grandfather, of Mount Prospect, Maryland. Legal business in connection with this matter seems to have taken Poe to Baltimore in the Summer and Fall of 1840.[469] Mrs. Clemm's lawyer had his offices in the basement of *Barnum's Hotel,* at the intersection of Fayette and Calvert Streets, where Poe was occasionally found. Poe seems to have stayed with the family of Mr. William J. High, an artist, and at that time had a daguerreotype taken by Stanton & Butler at 79 Fayette Street.[566]

This picture he gave to the Highs for their kindness. It afterward seems to have fallen into the hands of some of the Baltimore Poes.

On November 23, 1840, Poe was at home in Philadelphia answering a letter to F. W. Thomas, which — "I only received . . . about an hour ago, having been out of town for the last ten days. . . ." This, and a similar reference to an absence from town in August of the same year, possibly refers to the occasional trips to Baltimore. The rest of Poe's activities at this time related, for the most part, to his efforts to launch the *Penn Magazine.* In his letter to Thomas, Poe continues —

> Thank you a thousand times for your good wishes and kind offers. I shall wait anxiously for the promised article. I should like to have it, if possible, in the first sheet, which goes to press early in December. But I know that I may depend upon you, and therefore say no more upon this head. For the rest, your own experience and friendship will suggest the modes by which you may serve me in St. Louis. Perhaps, you may be able to have the accompanying ' Prospectus ' (of the *Penn*) (which you will see differs from the first) inserted once or twice in some of the city papers — if you can accomplish this without trouble I shall be greatly obliged to you. Have you heard that illustrious graduate

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[566] From the history of this daguerreotype, furnished by a Baltimore friend, it has been possible to reconstruct the story of these obscure trips.

of St. John's College, Cambridge (Billy Barlow) (a reference to Burton) has sold his magazine to Graham, of the *Casket?*

Mrs. Clemm and Virginia unite with me in the kindest remembrance to yourself and sister — with whom your conversation (always turning upon the ' one loved name ') has already made us so well acquainted. How long will it be before I see you again? Write immediately.

It was probably in November, 1840, that Poe and Mr. Graham first met and talked over the proposition of Poe's assuming charge of the new magazine that was to appear the first month of the new year. The definite engagement did not take place till later, but, as has been noticed, Poe contributed a story to the last number of the *Gentleman's* and his hand is found in the columns of the new monthly as early as February, 1841. That he did not contribute more, or appear largely in the first number, was due to the fact that he was now overtaken by one of those periods of illness, nervous collapse, and prostration which were so significant in his career. It was this, and the expectations of an arrangement with Graham which now perforce deferred the appearance of the *Penn,* and brought him to the verge of a physical and mental crisis.

CHAPTER XX
High Tide

MR. GRAHAM had not overlooked Burton's final admonition not to forget his young editor, and, by the middle of January, 1841, Mr. Poe was up and about again, for on the eighteenth of that month he had an interview with the proprietor of the two newly merged magazines, at which a satisfactory arrangement was made. The agreement with Mr. Graham promised to be the most liberal engagement with any magazine owner, which Poe had so far contracted. He had evidently learned something from his twin experiences with both Mr. White and Burton, and was now, from the first, frank about his desire to start a magazine of his own and to have a large part in shaping the policies of *Graham's,* should he undertake its editorial chair. An arrangement that bore some of the features of a compromise was therefore put in force.

The idea of the *Penn* was not to be abandoned, but was to be held in abeyance. If Poe proved himself capable, Mr. Graham, it appears, would either back him in the new adventure or give him an interest in the magazine, as circumstances might dictate. In the meantime Poe was to have a large, if not a directing share, in the policies of *Graham's;* to supply stories, articles, poetry, and criticism; and above all, to induce the best known literary characters of the time to lend the luster of their names and the drawing power of their contributions to its pages.[567]

It is certain that this arrangement had been thoroughly discussed between them prior to January, 1841, for, to the last number of *Burton's,* in December, 1840, Poe, as we have seen, had contributed the story of *The Man of the Crowd,* when the expiring *Gentleman's* had been under the management of its new editor. Poe's illness had delayed his assuming complete charge of the first number of *Graham's* which appeared in January, 1841, in all the triumph of fresh format and lavish illustration.

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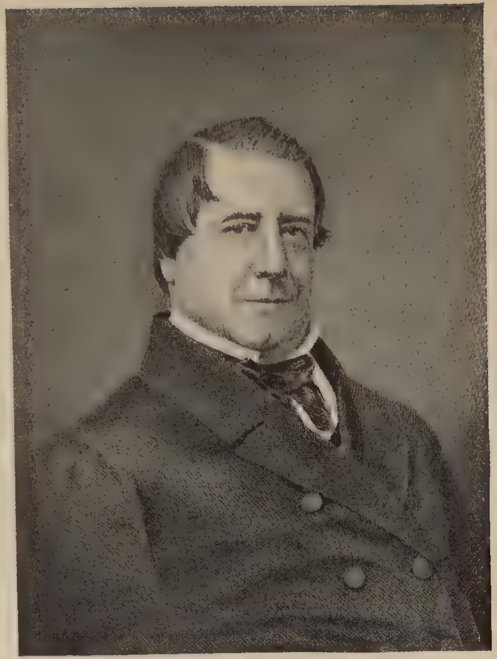
[567] The nature of Poe's "interest" with Mr. Graham is plainly to be pieced together from Graham's statement in his own magazine in 1850 in reply to Griswold's Poe obituary article. More specifically, the terms are plain in Poe's own correspondence after his withdrawal from *Graham's.* See Poe to Daniel Bryan July 6, 1842, etc.

Soon after, the jocular Mr. Burton, who had completely withdrawn from the magazine field, having bought out a bankrupt theatrical manager in Baltimore, opened up in Philadelphia with a blaze of glory in the New National Theater with *The Rivals* and *A Roland for an Oliver,* as the first bill on August 31, 1840. Mr. Burton's new theater was the finest in America; its scenery, its curtain, and its chandelier were "the marvels of the age." All of this, however, did not prevent its failure. The desire of the Englishman was to repopularize the stock company method which had undergone a serious decline in America, due to the then new "star system," and the exploitation of a new style of hectic publicity. After long vicissitudes, he finally succeeded in New York. With the beginning of 1841, except for a few acid references in his former editor's correspondence, he passes out of the life of Poe.

George Rex Graham (1813–1894), who now became a new and important factor in Poe's career, was a remarkable and, on the whole, an able man. He was the son of a Philadelphia merchant who had lost his fortune in one of the then frequent panics. At an early age he had learned the trade of cabinet-maker. Later on, he studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1839. About that time, he became one of the editors of the *Saturday Evening Post,* and the owner of the *Casket*. He also dabbled a good deal in the purchase of shares and merging of magazines, his final merger of the *Casket* and *Burton's* having involved Poe. With the launching of *Graham's* in 1841, he entered upon the most prosperous and important period of his career. He was the first to undertake successfully a great national magazine in the United States with an audience which numbered many thousands. In short, *Graham's* may be regarded as the forerunner of the large, modern American magazines. In this venture, the experience, the theories, and the abilities of Mr. Poe were attractive to



William Burton

An English comedian known as "Bully Burton", and one of the many Philadelphia magazine owners of the early 1840's. Editor-publisher of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Mr. Burton was one of the minor interesting figures of the day who came in contact with Poe

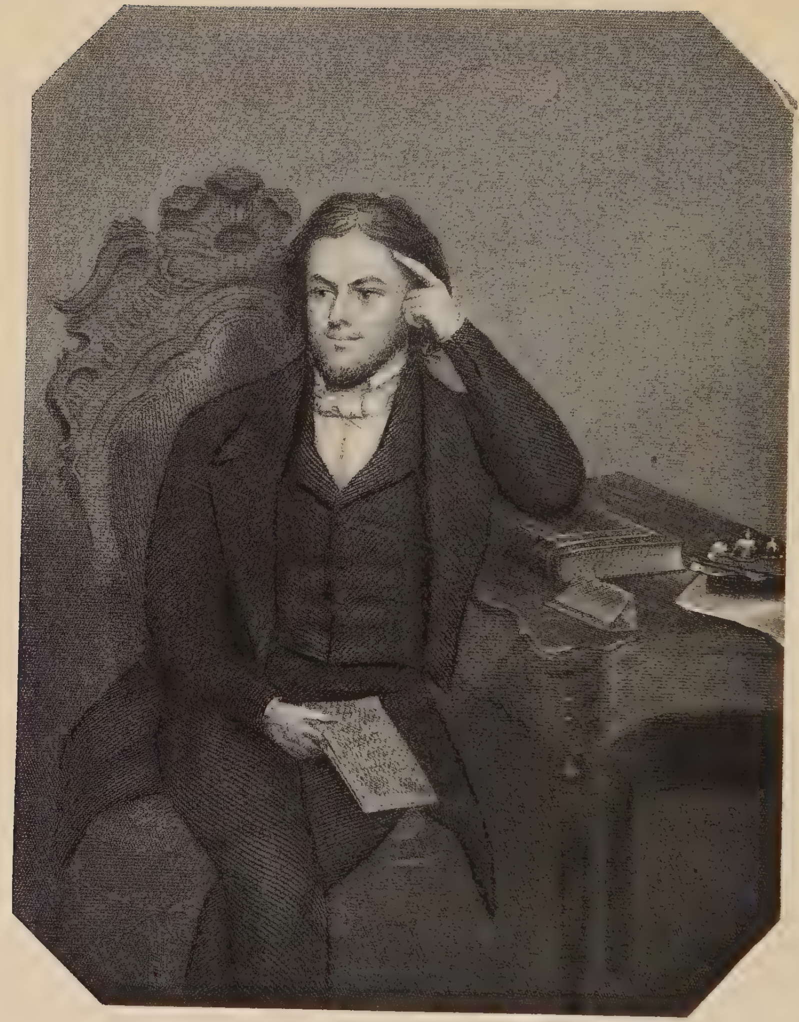
Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Historical Society

George Rex Graham

Founder and owner of *Graham's Magazine*

An able and kindly man, a pioneer in the American magazine field. Under Poe's editorship *Graham's Magazine* was one of the first to attain a circulation on a modern scale

Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Historical Society



Yours very sincerely,
Rufus W. Griswold

The Rev. Rufus W. Griswold

"Ludwig"

Author of the most popular anthologies of the era, and the editor of POE'S WORKS after his death, which Griswold prefaced with a virulent biography of the poet

From a portrait by J. B. Read, about the time Poe first met Griswold in Philadelphia

From "Our Contributor's" in Graham's

Courtesy of the Edgar Allan Poe Shrine, Richmond, Virginia

Mr. Graham, who was skilled in his choice of subordinates. These abilities, we may be sure, and not Mr. Burton's advice, were the deciding factors in the choice of an editor.

Mr. Graham announced that "he sought to find a mean between the uninteresting and severe literature that only Tories read and the namby-pambyism which was the ruling note of the age." In addition to this, he inaugurated the policy of paying his authors liberally. Mr. Longfellow received $50, and often more, for a poem. The song writer, George P. Norris, received that much in advance for any song he chose to write, no matter how bad it might be. Fenimore Cooper was paid $1800 for *The Islets of the Gulf* (*Jack Tier*), which Graham himself admitted did not bring him a single new subscriber, and others were well paid in proportion. Engravings sometimes cost from $100 to $200 a plate, and with printing and fancy paper ran well up to $500. In short Mr. Graham was lavish in his outlay, and it paid. Unfortunately there was one exception to this policy of generosity. The young editor of *Graham's Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine* — "embracing every department of literature, embellished with engravings, fashions, and music arranged for a piano-forte, harp and guitar" — received a salary which can only be described as meager. It was $800 a year.

For the articles and poems, that he contributed in addition to his regular work, Poe was doled a small rate per page that made the remuneration of Longfellow, and others, look princely. Perhaps this private fact was not without its bearing upon Poe's attitude towards some of the more fortunate New Englanders, the luster of whose names was, at least in this respect, more golden. There can be no doubt that he had been prevailed upon to suspend the *Penn* only by the promise from Mr. Graham of a substantial increase of salary at the end of six months, and the prospect of a partial ownership in his magazine at the end of a year. Mr. Graham began with 5,000 subscribers; in about a year and a half he had nearly 40,000. Whatever part the proprietor's business judgment may have played in this then phenomenal success, it must be admitted that most of it was due to Poe, who, from February, 1841, to April, 1842, practically reigned supreme.

Yet, tragically enough, it was this very success that made Mr. Graham reluctant to share it with his editor, or to take part with him in his darling free-lance venture. Poe, however, continued to cling to the idea of his own magazine to the last. His experience with George Rex Graham was only a repetition, on a larger and more affable scale, of his associations with White and Burton. Again the fatal "irregularities" played their part, this time more seriously, and again the ghost of being his own manager haunted the scene and kept him from giving himself wholly to his position.

Small as was the remuneration which Poe received from Mr. Graham in comparison with that of other contributors,[568] it constituted the best offer which he had ever received, one which, in his desperate circumstances, he could not think of disregarding. The *Penn* project was therefore temporarily allowed to lapse, and on February 20, 1841, the *Saturday Evening Post* announced that the *Penn* was "suspended," because of the extreme financial stringency of the times, from which magazines were the first to suffer. Nor was this an unlikely excuse. The Bank of the United States had closed its doors after borrowing some $13,000,000 from other Philadelphia banks, many of which immediately succumbed. Poe was paid a considerable compliment in the notice, and it was announced that this "stern, just, and competent critic would now assume the editorial chair at *Graham's*." Many of Poe's friends, especially at the South, were greatly disappointed by the announcement. John Tomlin wrote him from Jackson, Tennessee, "Have you indefinitely postponed the publication of the *Penn Magazine?* If so, your friends here are grievously disappointed . . . ," and F. W. Thomas, from Washington where he had lately gone to obtain a government position:

Washington City, *March* 7, 1841

MY DEAR POE, — Your humble servant hails for the present from this land of excitement and rascality. I am here scribbling about matters and things. I have been in Washington this week past. Dow, whom

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[568] The salary agreed upon is said to have been $1,500 a year with promise of increase. There is considerable conflict about this item which ranges from $1,400 to $2,000 in various accounts. Poe received a salary of $800!

I see frequently, told me that you had given up the idea of the *Penn* and was engaged with Graham. I regret that you have been prevented from carrying out that glorious enterprise at present, but you'll do it yet. . . .

I hope, my dear Poe, that you are well and doing well; before long, that is, in a month or so, I hope to take you by the hand. My respects to your mother and lady. Dow is well — and I hope in spite of his Locofocoism will retain his office. Write me if you please, as soon as convenient, as I must answer the proposition I have spoken of above.

P. S. Please direct to me to *Washington* and not St. Louis.

"The proposition" was a proposal by Thomas to write a serial novel for *Graham's Magazine,* to which end the good offices of Poe might be expected. Nor was Thomas's removal from St. Louis to the capital, and his reference to politics, without a particular bearing upon Poe. Thomas, as we have seen, had been a hearty supporter of Harrison, who had been inaugurated only nine days before this letter was written. Harrison had known Thomas's father very well, and soon found a government position for the son. It was the purpose of Thomas to obtain a government clerkship for Poe, which he would very likely have done, had not the death of the old Whig hero on May 4, 1841, upset not only the plans of his friends, but the entire policy of his party. Tyler succeeded, to whom Thomas was less well known, and the effect was adverse to Poe as we shall see.

The offices of *Graham's Magazine* were located at Third and Chestnut Streets, on the top floor of the old *Philadelphia Ledger* Building, the *Dollar Newspaper,* in which Poe afterward published *The Gold Bug,* being on the floor immediately underneath. Here Poe came regularly almost every day, from the house on Coates Street, clear on the other side of town. It was from this chair in Graham's office that he now began to turn off the reviews and the stories which, for the next year and a half, continued to thrill the readers of the magazine and to add so much to his own reputation. Some of his best work was done here between periods of opening the mail, sorting the manuscripts, and preparing the copy for new issues — an editorial function, which, with his knowledge and interest in printing, and the methods of illustration then in vogue — he was able to perform peculiarly well.

In the mornings, it was the custom of Mr. Graham and his wife, who now lived in considerable style, to drive up in their carriage; climb up the three flights to the office; and scissor the piles of morning mail, taking out the bank-notes and bills that now rolled in with increasing regularity, but leaving the answering of the correspondence to Mr. Poe and his assistants. Graham and his spouse then departed with the roll of money to change it as rapidly as possible, and to the greatest advantage, at the shops of the money-changers along the street just below. This regular matutinal pilfering undoubtedly disgusted the young editor upon whose shoulders most of the burden fell, and played its part in his leaving the paper soon after. The morning harvest for the next two years was always large, but in it he had little share. By July, 1841, the subscription list had arisen to 20,000, which promised a gross harvest of about $60,000 to Mr. Graham for the first six months of his venture, and brought a profit to him of about $15,000 at the end of a year.

Graham's, indeed, rapidly came to be the most important and busiest magazine office in the United States. Situated in the great publishing center of the country, about it gathered a bevy of interesting personalities — writers, artists, printers, and engravers — and if nothing else, the worldly importance which the chair at its editorial desk temporarily conferred upon Poe was grateful to a soul which hungered and thirsted for admiration and recognition.

In the same room with Poe, but at another desk, sat Charles J. Peterson, an able assistant editor. He was of Swedish descent, and one of a family of Philadelphia magazine dabblers and printers. His brothers, Theophilus Beasely Peterson and George Thomas Peterson, were much in and out, being minor editors and publishers themselves. A little later they set up shop at 306 Chestnut Street, and began to issue cheap stereotyped books of popular authors at twenty-five cents a copy and less, an unheard-of feat at that time. All the latest publishing and printing ideas were in the air, and were discussed diligently by the black-stocked and flare-tailed gentlemen who dropped in to listen to George Graham's spritely and pleasant conversation, in hopes, perhaps, of an invitation to his famous dinner table.

There were also artists: Thomas Sully, occasionally, who did much work for Graham; a host of minor but clever illustrators; Darley, and the Englishman John Sartain, one of the foremost engravers of the time, whom Sully had prevailed upon to come to America, where he throve at his art and made enough money to enter the magazine field later on, to his own undoing, with *Sartain's Union Magazine*. It was Sartain to whom Poe afterward offered the final manuscript of *The Raven,* and it was he who published posthumously the last draft of *The Bells*. Thomas Dunn English was much about the place, as was Captain Mayne Reid, a rather charming novelist who looked like Napoleon III, and was the author of a novel called *Afloat in the Forest,* a tale of a white family adrift on a huge log down the Amazon, that appeared serially in *Our Young Folks,* and intrigued a generation of breathless little boys. He and English frequently walked home with Poe to Coates Street, and later on to the Spring Garden house. Charles Alexander, Burton's printer, had been retained. He was a good friend of Poe. Nor was there any lack of more distinguished visitors.

These made it a point when in the " Quaker City " to call upon Mr. Graham and the much feared Mr. Poe to peddle their wares to the highest bidder then in the field; and always to take dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Graham, who spent much of their new wealth on a lavish table and house, bidding all the live spirits of their world in to dine on the best the land afforded. These parties were brilliant, and were long remembered.

Mr. and Mrs. George Rex Graham had provided themselves with a rather handsome house on Arch Street, whence Mrs. Graham drove out daily behind a fine team of greys that attracted attention even in Philadelphia, a city that went in for smart turnouts. It was her custom at times to call for Virginia, when the pair would drive back down Chestnut Street shopping at the smart Philadelphia stores, after the manner of womankind. To be sure, Mrs. Graham did all of the shopping, although this was the most prosperous time that Virginia and Mrs. Clemm were ever to know. Poe had provided Virginia with a harp, a little pianoforte, and a few luxuries of prettiness in dress in which she and her mother reveled.[569] Sometimes the trip may have ended, as many such a trip did terminate, at Eugene Roussel's store at 114 Chestnut Street, with the black bear in the window, where one of the earliest soda-water fountains in the country was installed. Such trips would be rare, however, and long remembered. The year 1841 was the last in which Virginia was really able to go about much. Speaking of Poe's manner of life at this time, Graham afterward remarked:

> I shall never forget how solicitous of the happiness of his wife and mother-in-law he was, whilst one of the editors of *Graham's Magazine*, his whole efforts seemed to be to procure the comfort and welfare of his home. Except for their happiness and the natural ambition of having a magazine of his own, I never heard him deplore the want of wealth. The truth is he cared little for money, and knew less of its value, for he seemed to have no personal expenses! What he received from me in regular monthly installments went directly into the hands of his mother-in-law for family comforts; and *twice* only I remember his purchasing some rather expensive luxuries for his house, and then he was nervous to the degree of misery until he had, by extra articles, covered what he considered an imprudent indebtedness. His love for his wife was a sort of rapturous worship of the spirit of beauty which he felt was fading before his eyes. I have seen him hovering around her when she was ill, with all the fond fear and tender anxiety of a mother for her first born — her slightest cough causing in him a shudder, a breast chill that was visible. . . .[570]

It seems certain that the year 1841 was one of the times when Poe was most free from his besetting troubles, poverty, and the depressed physical state which led to the use of stimulants. It was probably at this time that Mrs. Clemm began to gather about her a few household articles, the straight-backed flower painted chairs, the brown china with the Chinese river scenes on it,[571] the four-poster beds, curtains, a tea set, and deep-grained, red carpets in which Poe so delighted. All of these were lost a few years later in the desperate poverty that overtook her before the move to New York.

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[569] Mr. Graham himself tells of Poe's buying some luxuries, and his uneasiness until they were paid for. Both Graham and his wife were much at the Poes' house, and he specifically mentions taking both Poe and Virginia out to drive. This was certainly not a solitary instance. Roussel's was a well known rendezvous in the '40s.

[570] G. R. Graham's *Defense of Poe, Graham's*, 1850.

The warning of the breakdown at the end of 1840 had not been without its lesson, and for the next nine months or so, during the first part of his reign at *Graham's*, Poe braced up, as the importance of his new position demanded. Then the old troubles returned and be began to be " irregular." This period marks a peak, perhaps the crest, of his creative faculties.[572] As it was, even then life was not without its temptations. There were those suppers and dinners at Mr. Graham's on Arch Street.

To facilitate hospitality, Mr. Graham had a door broken through the party wall between his own house and that of Elijah Van Sychel, a wine merchant on Second Street, and the best of vintages flowed, from an inexhaustible supply, through this private way onto the great oval table in Graham's dining-room beneath a chandelier of bubble crystals purchased from a defunct theater. Here, about a table set under the crystal-twinkling candles, in a room full of mirrors, Poe's especial abomination, Mr. Graham gathered about him the writing and artistic fraternity of the city: the artists Thomas Sully, Darley, Robert Bud, and Sartain; N. P. Willis, when he was in Philadelphia; Judge Conrad, Thomas Dunn English, Louis A. Godey, Mrs. Hale, the Petersons, T. C. Clarke, Rufus Griswold, and the " sweet lady writer," Grace Greenwood. Even Henry Clay came there once to dine, and to toast the delightful Mrs. Graham, who presided over the Philadelphia prodigality of her table with a happy and memorable charm.[573] Poe was often seen at the board, coming with a sleeveless mantle thrown over one shoulder; in the inevitable suit of raven black, hoping to be seated next to Thomas Sully, to whom he could talk of Robert and of old Richmond days, and hear of his friends. Here it was, too, that he often, and for a while pleasantly, found himself face to face with his future biographer, Griswold, while story and anecdote followed the bowl, and the bottles appeared mysteriously through the so convenient private door. The candles frequently burned low before they rose. It was delightful, and it was hard to withstand.

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[571] The description of these articles is literal. Some of the chairs are still in Philadelphia. The second landlord of the Spring Garden house also remembered articles left behind in 1844, in lieu of rent. Mr. William Owens, the present tenant (1926) at 530 North Seventh Street, has a unique relic of the Poe china. Also see reminiscences of T. C. Clarke, Sartain, Graham, and *Poe in Philadelphia* by Alexander Harvey, the *Press*, Philadelphia, June 19, 1892.

[572] The " peak " does not imply that the best or most perfect items of his creative faculty were turned off while Poe was editor of *Graham's*, but that during that period both as a critic and an artist he functioned importantly, consistently, and for a considerable time during which his contact with various important personalities was especially significant.

But there was a reverse to this convivial and social medal which was not so bright. Mrs. Clemm, it appears, was much worried by these dinners at Graham's and would wait late in the kitchen to take Poe home. Characteristically enough, she also brought a basket, and fragments of the feast accompanied her home with Eddie, who otherwise was given to dropping in for a few brandies with Henry B. Hirst, or absinthe with Sartain — then almost anything might happen. It might be Front Street or Lower Dock, and another spell in bed. For a while, though, all went well — Mr. Poe was regularly and hard at work.

Besides the usual routine involved in the editing and makeup of a large magazine, Poe proved himself of great value to his proprietor by his ability to secure for the columns of his periodical the magnet of well-known names. A considerable portion of his time through the Spring of 1841 was taken up in writing to various American authors asking them to contribute. This correspondence frequently took the form of circular letters, only slightly altered to suit the individual case. He was quite skilful in drafting these, and the response was often cordial. Poe had followed the same scheme successfully with both White and Burton, but in Graham's case he had the added bait of high pay to sweeten the lure, and the pages of a really important publication to open to his correspondents.

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[573] When Mr. Graham was ending his days poor and infirm at Orange, New Jersey, in the early 1890's, the lavish dinners of his prosperous days were recalled by the few who remembered a discarded but once important figure in American Journalism. John Sartain, T. C. Clarke, N. P. Willis, and others have left accounts of Graham in his heyday.

In the Spring and Summer of 1841, he wrote to Washington Irving, Fenimore Cooper, Fitz-Greene Halleck, N. P. Willis, and several others, asking their coöperation. These letters were peculiar, however, in that they were not only a plea in disguised form for *Graham's*, but also show that Poe had taken seriously Mr. Graham's promise to aid in the establishing of the new magazine in which Poe was to have a proprietary interest. In short, Poe could not drop the darling idea of the *Penn* or a similar periodical, as this letter to Longfellow typical of many others, plainly shows:

Philadelphia, *June* 22, 1841

Dear Sir, — Your letter of the 19th May was received. I regret to find my anticipations confirmed, and that you cannot make it convenient to accept Mr. Graham's proposition. Will you now pardon me for making another?

I need not call your attention to the signs of the times in respect to magazine literature. You will admit the tendency of the age lies in this way — so far at least as regards the lighter letters. The brief, the terse, the condensed, and the easily circulated, will take the place of the diffuse, the ponderous, and the inaccessible. Even our reviews, (lucus a non lucendo) are found too massive for the taste of the day. I do not mean for the taste of the tasteless, but for that of the few. In the meantime the finest minds of Europe are beginning to lend their spirit to magazines. In this country, unhappily, we have not any journal of the class which either can afford to offer pecuniary inducement to the highest talent, or which would be, in all respects, a fitting vehicle for its thoughts. In the supply of this deficiency there would be a point gained; and in the hope of at least partially supplying it, Mr. Graham and myself propose to establish a Magazine. . . .

Poe then continues with a description of the format which he regards ideal, the hope of gaining noted contributors, and a request to Longfellow to furnish one paper each month — "prose or poetry, absolute, or serial."

This letter, and its several copies despatched to others, is remarkable for bringing out the strong and weak points of Poe's judgment. His literary analysis of the time is excellent. Indeed, many of his remarks about the reviews "read and not read" apply today, but his lack of foresight and a knowledge of human nature in supposing that Mr. Graham would give up the then so profitable magazine he already owned, to embark on a totally new venture, merely to carry out the pet literary theories of his assistant editor, is almost childish. Nor is it likely that Graham relished the implied criticism of the magazine which Poe was then editing for him in such letters as these. News of such correspondence as this must inevitably have come to his ears, as it had come to Burton's, and have made the ensuing parting with Poe less hard to bear. Poe had also written John P. Kennedy a somewhat similar note in June, in which he also asked for a novel. Mr. Kennedy had been elected to Congress, however, and did not comply.[574]

Through the Summer and Fall of 1841, Poe also continued his quite intimate correspondence with Dr. Snodgrass of Baltimore, who contributed several items to *Graham's,* one of which Poe says the "proof reader" spoiled. At the same time, its author was appearing in *Godey's.* A contract to write exclusively for *Godey's* prevented N. P. Willis from contributing to *Graham's.*[575] The first correspondence between him and Poe bears the date of November 30, 1841, but there had evidently been considerable previous intercourse. Mr. Willis was later on to play an important rôle in the affairs of Poe. Poe had evidently been using a little "diplomacy" to get around the contract difficulty with Godey, and Mr. Willis's letter appears to be a little surprised in tone.

That Poe regarded even the important post on *Graham's* as only a temporary makeshift, and that he chafed under his poverty, is plainly brought out as early as May 20, 1841, when the first definite suggestion of a federal office, which for the next two years continued to agitate them both, was made by his friend, F. W. Thomas, himself on the national payroll at Washington.

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[574] Poe's faith in Mr. Kennedy's kindness must have been at times a little onerous to his early patron. A little later he appeals to him again for political influence; another appeal, still later, is made for money. Cash loans Mr. Kennedy refused, perhaps with good reason. In all else he helped when he could. See also Chapter XVIII, note 507.

[575] The items mentioned here are to be found in the correspondence with the persons mentioned about this date, September and November, 1841.

Mr. Thomas's account of the duties implied, and the leisure left over for literary-minded gentlemen is alluring:

> My Dear Poe:
>
> . . . How would you like to be an office holder here at $1500 per year payable monthly by Uncle Sam, who, however slack he may be to his general creditors, pays his officials with due punctuality. How would you like it? You stroll to your office a little after nine in the morning leisurely, and you stroll from it a little after two in the afternoon homeward to dinner and return no more that day. If, during office hours, you have anything to do, it is an agreeable relaxation from the monotonous laziness of the day. You have on your desk everything in the writing line in apple-pie order, and if you choose to lucubrate in a literary way, why you can lucubrate. . . .

We can be sure that Mr. Poe would have liked this very well indeed. The young man who had found time to compose poems on the counter at *Ellis & Allan,* some years before, would have known well how to take advantage of the strolling leisure and the writing materials in " apple-pie order." Mr. Thomas was already " lucubrating " considerably himself while drawing down $1,000 a year. Poe replied on June 26, 1841, congratulating Thomas, and suddenly discovering that he himself was an ardent Whig, — one who had " battled with right good-will for Harrison, when opportunity offered." Alas! that good man was dead! "With Mr. Tyler I have some slight personal influence, although it is a matter which he has possibly forgotten," Poe adds — but, " I am a Virginian — at least I call myself one " — and it is not to be forgotten that President Tyler had been born in old Charles City County, the oldest part of the Old Dominion.

A few days later Thomas writes again, urging Poe to come to Washington, and suggesting that his old friend John P. Kennedy might be induced to help with his newly acquired congressional influence.[574] Poe would like to have gone and replied:

> I wish to God I could visit Washington, but — the old story you know — I have no money; not enough to take me there, to say nothing of getting back. It is hard to be poor, but as I am kept so by an honest motive I dare not complain. . . . I would be glad to get almost any appointment, even a $500.00 one, so that I have something inde-

pendent of letters for a subsistence. To coin one's brain into silver, at the nod of a master, is, to my thinking, the hardest task in the world. . . .

Here in a nutshell we have Poe's own objection to magazine work, and here the matter rested for some time. Thomas saw Kennedy, who promised to help, and drew the attention of the President's sons to Poe's articles. Poe on his part began to find great merits in Robert Tyler's poetry — the matter dragged on.[576]

The Spring of 1842 had been productive of many interviews and meetings which initiated some of the most important friendships and acquaintances of Poe's life. Perhaps the most far-reaching of these was his encounter with Rufus Wilmot Griswold.

The Reverend Mr. Griswold, for such was the gentleman's rightful title, had been born at Benson, Vermont, in 1815, and in his early days had traveled both abroad and in the United States. He had been a kind of printer-publisher's apprentice for some time, but had later on taken up the study of theology and become a Baptist clergyman. He left that, even then, unlucrative profession, to become an editor, a compiler, and perhaps, on the whole, the most competent hack writer about personalities in the United States. There were no authors, then of any note or even glimmering obscurity in the United States, whom Mr. Griswold did not in a sketchy way know all about. His editing of various works of sundry kinds, and his connections with various periodicals had given him a cannily clever insight into the lives, tendencies, and ambitions of his contemporaries. In addition to this he possessed a too shrewd natural insight. Had he not been so shrewd about personalities he might have been more literary. The Reverend Doctor's attack on Poe after the latter's death, and a certain flair for petty treachery, combined with his subtle methods of invigorating truth with a specious dose of probable lies, has induced a large number of his biographers, and especially the protagonists of Poe, to surmise that Rufus Griswold was provided with a dash of canine blood on his mother's side. Lowell, who was not given to invective, once remarked that "the Reverend Mr. Griswold is an ass, and, what's more, a knave." This was going it a bit too far, however. The truth seems to be that his knavery was very careful and his asininity somewhat encyclopædiac. Perhaps the most serious charge against him is that he was the first "great" American anthologist.

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[576] Robert Tyler, the President's older son, was a frequent contributor to magazines and newspapers in both prose and verse. He had married Priscilla Cooper, a daughter of Thomas Cooper. She was then mistress of the White House, the President being a widower.

Poe met Griswold in Philadelphia sometime in the early Spring of 1841, when the Doctor was engaged in preparing and publishing his *Poets and Poetry of America,* a book that appeared the following year and subsequently went through some twenty-nine editions. Poe had not been writing poetry for some time. Prose, and the press of much journalistic business had forbidden. He had not forgotten, however, his first literary love. The three early volumes had been constantly called upon for revised republication here and there, and Griswold's anthology was an opportunity not to be missed. Griswold, on his part, was anxious to do a favor for the rising young editor of *Graham's;* and in March, 1841, some correspondence and talk evidently passed between them, with the result that several of Poe's poems and a sketch of his life — very sketchy and misleading, indeed — were included in the new anthology with a modest meed of praise by Griswold.[577] The most memorable poem of Poe's which was accepted was *The Haunted Palace,* which Poe claimed, but mistakenly, that Longfellow had plagiarized in his *Beleaguered City.* Significantly enough, Poe remarks to Griswold that, "by the

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[577] These autobiographical sketches, the data for which were furnished by Poe to Griswold, Hirst, Thomas, Lowell, etc., etc., from time to time are not to be taken seriously as evidence against Poe's veracity. Almost any author of any note can recall furnishing *A Sketch of My Life,* on the sudden demand of a publisher or correspondent, that was sufficient unto the hour and was never expected to stand up under careful scrutiny. There is no intent to deceive in this type of "biography," but simply a desire to please. Poe substituted an interesting trip abroad, which he meant to take, for a boresome year in the army, and moved up his birthday a precocious notch or two. Such fibs are the common stock in trade of innumerable writers. The President of the United States must be born in a log cabin, and every American poet must live, at least for a while, in London or Paris. This is simply the orange juice that enables the public to swallow the man. The creation of a personal legend is the necessity of genius. The gods live by myths.

'Haunted Palace' I meant to imply a mind haunted by phantoms — a disordered brain." For the time being, all was pleasant between these two young men, whose association was so mutually disastrous to both.

The first feeling of jealousy arose between them because Griswold, above all things, hoped to be a poet himself, but his performance in the creative field was lamentable, and Poe took no care to disguise his contempt. On the other hand, no praise which Griswold could have bestowed on Poe would have been sufficient to the poet's praise-hungry ears. The modest draught which he did receive, he felt to be an insult. In short, he was classed as an equal of many and the inferior of a few. It was a critical estimate which he never forgave. Shortly afterward, Griswold appeared as an editorial rival for Poe's own chair; Poe made fun of the anthology in a public lecture; and the foundations for a hatred that has followed both beyond the grave were thus satisfactorily laid. These petty causes seem out of all proportion to the dire results. Yet no one could be more biting than Poe when he chose to be. Speaking of the *North American Review* and its coterie, which he especially loathed, he once closed an acid paragraph with an extract from Sterne's *Letter from France:* "As we rode along the valley we saw a herd of asses on the top of one of the mountains — how they viewed and reviewed us!"

About midsummer Poe again addressed Lea & Blanchard on the subject of getting out another edition of *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque,* in which were to be included his new stories of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and *The Descent into the Maelström,* lately brought out in *Graham's.* "The new pieces will be eight in number, making the entire collection thirty-three, which will occupy two thick novel volumes." Once again, he was forced to propose that all the profits should go to the publishers, his only reward to be twenty copies for himself. Even this, however, was not attractive to Lea & Blanchard, who replied immediately:

August 16, 1841

EDGAR A. POE

. . . In answer we very much regret to say that the state of affairs is such as to give little encouragement to undertakings. As yet we have not got through the edition of the other work, and up to this time it has not returned us the expense of the publication . . . etc.

" The state of affairs " obviously refers to the chronic condition of financial panic and publishing difficulties at the time, from which Poe suffered in several ways. It is safe to say that the same tales have, in various editions and publications, been reprinted thousands of times in many languages. To their author they brought nothing but a few complimentary copies, and the small price paid for them by magazines. Fame has been his only reward.

Poe, like all the other American authors of his time, suffered from a publishing and printing situation in the United States, purely legal and economic in its nature, which for many decades, from 1815 to the early '90s of the last century, exercised a controlling influence on American literature. The erudite and abstract minds which, for the most part, in critical and academic circles manufacture the literary comment and authoritative judgments upon the literature of the past, seem wholly ignorant of or oblivious to the fact that, in order to have any voice in the choir of his era, an author must first get himself printed and then widely published, *i.e.*, distributed. In this mechanical and economic process, his artistic or purely literary merit is, during his lifetime, only too often a negligible factor. No matter what the literary merit of a work may be, unless it be embodied in a book it can never be known. This patent and obvious fact, and the purely practical factors which govern it, are scarcely even commented upon by those who deal, afterward, with the content of literature from a detached and artistic standpoint.

That the clauses of a nation's copyright laws may very largely determine the forms of its literature and dictate inevitably the whole trend of a literary epoch, is too obvious a consideration to intrigue the minds of critics intent upon nice abstractions. A study of the correspondence of American publishing houses during the last century largely explains, upon this practical basis, the whole trend and condition of American literature. As one turns the faded leaves of the copy books of, say, Harpers, Carey & Lea, Longman & Company, etc., it soon becomes patent that the popularity of foreign authors in the United States, and the permanence of their reputation, were more the result of the conditions of copyright law, than of their own inherent merit. In all this, the advance in the art of printing, the skill and the wages of the printer and binder, and the morals of the book trade played an inevitable part.

The result of the law of copyright in the United States during the Nineteenth Century, and the publishing conditions it evoked, was to create for all American novelists, poets, and authors of any books whatsoever, a tremendous handicap in the race for fame in America, particularly with English writers. In the final analysis it was a wall *which no single American author of the early Nineteenth Century* was ever fully able to surmount during his lifetime.[578]

Stated briefly and baldly, the situation of American publishing, and therefore of American letters, from the close of the War of 1812, and for many decades thereafter, was conditioned by the fact that the financial survival of American printers and publishers was wholly dependent upon the number and the rapidity with which they could pirate the editions of English and other current foreign books. Up until 1812 the processes of printing and the means of transportation were so slow and precarious that, although there was a considerable reprinting and importation of English classics through ordinary channels, there was no thought or opportunity of exploiting such a trade, any more than a publisher might now be said to be " exploiting " Byron by offering a new edition of his works. With the new generation after the War of 1812, however, both the taste for reading, and the facilities for printing and importation had entirely altered. Letters from even such then remote places as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, or Augusta, Georgia, show that cheap English novels were all the rage. To publish an American novel or any native book, implied the purchase of copyright from the author, or at least a royalty, followed by the laborious printing of it from handwritten manuscript. On the other hand to bring out an English novel, or an English translation of a French or German book, required no payments to the author whatever. All that was necessary was a single copy of the book. The main point of success was to be first in the field. Thus the publishing house that *first* obtained a copy of a new foreign book skimmed the cream off the sales. To obtain such copies even a few hours in advance, there were no lengths to which publishers were not prepared to go.

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[578] An excellent, and one of the few available texts on this important aspect of American letters is *Mathew Carey, A Study in American Literature*, Earl L. Bradsher, the Columbia University Press, 1912, to which the following brief discussion is frankly in great debt. Thanks are due to Dr. Bradsher for permission to quote from the correspondence of Carey & Lea embodied in his text, and from his own text.

Large publishing houses had their English scouts, sometimes an employee of an English firm, or the firm itself. These agents forwarded the proof or the advance copies of a first edition by " the first and swiftest sailing vessel." Swift schooners and sloops were employed to meet these vessels at sea, or at the outer anchorage, where the books were transferred and brought in a few hours or a day in advance, thus insuring a gain in time, which was the deciding factor. Travelers were importuned, and their books bought at preposterous prices. Many an English gentleman found that the novels he had laid in, to while away the tedious hours of a voyage, constituted an unexpected and handsome investment. The volume having once been obtained, its binding was torn off; the leaves distributed among a gang of swift compositors, and, without even the trouble of calculating the page make-up, by evening the work was in frames; the presses went all night, and, by evening of the next day, a new American edition of Scott, Byron, Miss Porter, Miss Edgeworth, Moore, Burney, Lady Morgan, Leigh Hunt or someone else was on its way to booksellers all over the country. If necessary, all the seats in the outgoing stages would be hired to carry the books. For instance, one publisher writes:

> MR. JOHN MILLER, *June* 17, 1823,
>
> We have rec'd *Quentin Durward* most handsomely and have the Game completely in our own hands this time. In 28 hours after receiving it, we had 1500 copies sent off or ready to go, and the whole Edition is now nearly distributed. In two days we shall publish it here and in New York and the Pirates may print it as soon as they please. The opposition Edition will be out in 48 hours after they have one of

> our copies but we shall have complete and entire possession of every market in the Country for a short time. Independently of profit, it is in the highest degree gratifying to be able to manage the matter in our own way without fear of interference . . . etc.[578]

This was publishing with a vengeance! A whole volume might be devoted to the elaboration and proof of the strange conditions of bookselling and publishing in early Nineteenth Century America. Even a glimpse is illuminating. The opinion, so generally held, that the intellectual and social background of America was incapable, for a long period, of producing any considerable number of able writers, rests on a conclusion which has been arrived at for the most part without a knowledge of the controlling facts. Under the existing copyright laws, the only salvation for American authors lay in the limited output of English books. Unfortunately for Americans, the English were prolific.

> When Scott appeared, one immensely popular novel followed another in quick succession. The American public after devouring the latest, looked for the next. Hardly had Scott ceased to produce when Dickens, ably seconded by Marryat, began a series equally popular; and, when Marryat fell out, Benjamin Disraeli was ready to fill the gap. From *Waverley* in 1814, to *The Mystery of Edwin Drood,* 1870, the year that did not produce at least one highly popular British novel was a barren one. Against this continuous stream the American novelist was compelled to wage a bitter struggle.[578]

The struggle, from the standpoint of the creation of a native literature in the United States, was largely in vain. America was annually flooded with English books; the prestige of wide and international fame went to foreigners; and the native writer had to combat, not only the vast difficulty of getting published at all, but along with it, the suspicion that he was a provincial tyro. " Who reads an American book? " asked a famous English critic. Who, indeed! When six books out of ten that got printed even in the United States were English.

Against this condition and the reading prejudices which it evoked, Poe with others waged a ceaseless and a futile battle. That his collected tales did not sell even 750 copies in a single year was no comment on their literary quality; the miracle was that they had been published at all. " The state of affairs is *such,"* say Lea & Blanchard — and it certainly was. Only by waiving his royalty could Poe appear at all. The price of American books was always higher than that of English, as the royalty was necessarily included in a native production. Cooper went through a series of failures. Carey & Lea lost $2,600 on one of Cooper's novels alone. Washington Irving, by the 1840's, found difficulty in getting his work published with even a decent royalty, and was thwarted in obtaining an edition of over 2,500. His hopes for fine editions and an adequate format were regarded as the dreams of eccentric luxury. In March, 1842, he is offered " the . . . present arrangement for two years at one thousand dollars per annum and *include* the right to publish *Astoria, Miscellany,* etc., in it. Or if you wish to publish *Mohamet* this spring and the two volumes of tales mentioned in your letter . . ." and this represented the *ne plus ultra* to the " prince of American authors." Dorr's Rebellion in Rhode Island, the failure of the United States Bank, the suspension of interest, even on state deposits, by banks in Maryland and Pennsylvania, and the disastrous disorganization of the currency, completed the scene of gloom in which Poe had appeared with his *Grotesques and Arabesques*. Poe was only one of many. He was in fact typical of all:

J. FENIMORE COOPER *Esq., Nov.* 13, 1834

We wish to remark that we have been *compelled* to sell Books cheaper than we did formerly. When your early works were published English novels retailed for $1.50 and American could be sold at $2. Now the other retails at $1, and the other at about $1.50 less. . . .[578]

William Gilmore Simms labored under similar difficulties and could get his books set up only slowly, chapter by chapter in small editions, while his publishers were using as many as ten or twelve printing firms at a time to rush through an English novel. This discouraging process is shown in the following letter to Robert Carey, the publisher in Philadelphia:

Woodland, 5th *May*

DEAR SIR:

I sent you some time since seven Chapters of B. B. — To Mr. Beite. I have just transmitted the conclusion of Vol. 1 together with a portion

64 pages — of Vol. 2 inc. I trust you receive (them) safely . . . etc.[579]

The result of all these exasperating delays, small royalties and failures, lack of prestige, and ceaseless competition was to discourage any but the most determined American writers from writing novels or works that required the dignity of book form. Hence innumerable magazines flourished, and the short story became the favored medium and fast developed form. Poe wrote short stories, not because he regarded them as a great art form, but because no other form would pay. American novels were almost driven out of existence, verse was confined to magazines, and the cheap pamphleted English plays flooded the market. The only recourse for an American writer was to write for the magazine, or even newspaper field; or to become one of a group such as the transcendentalists, who manufactured their own audience. In the sparsely settled South, plantation distances made such groups impossible. Coteries were therefore confined to New England, or to one or two cities where a few American authors asserted themselves like Kennedy, Bayard Taylor, or the Knickerbockers. New England was the most self-conscious and best organized native audience, and there a few American books actually sold. Elsewhere the foreign flood washed clear over literary heads. Philadelphia was the great American publishing center, but it published English books. The cause had been enacted by the Congress into a federal statute for the encouragement and protection of authors.

In considering the desperate and sometimes ignoble and petty lengths to which Poe, Longfellow, Lowell, and others went to obtain publication and an adequate hearing, the conditions of the time must be borne in mind. Had even the best of authors not done so, the ranks of the mute and inglorious Miltons would have been augmented, and posterity have been none the wiser. The end, in this case, justified the means. It was a case of survival and existence; right and meet so to do. The protests of two generations of thwarted and impoverished American authors were

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[579] From a letter of William Gilmore Simms belonging to the author.

Laurel Hill Cemetery

A favorite Sunday Afternoon Saunter in the 1840's in Philadelphia

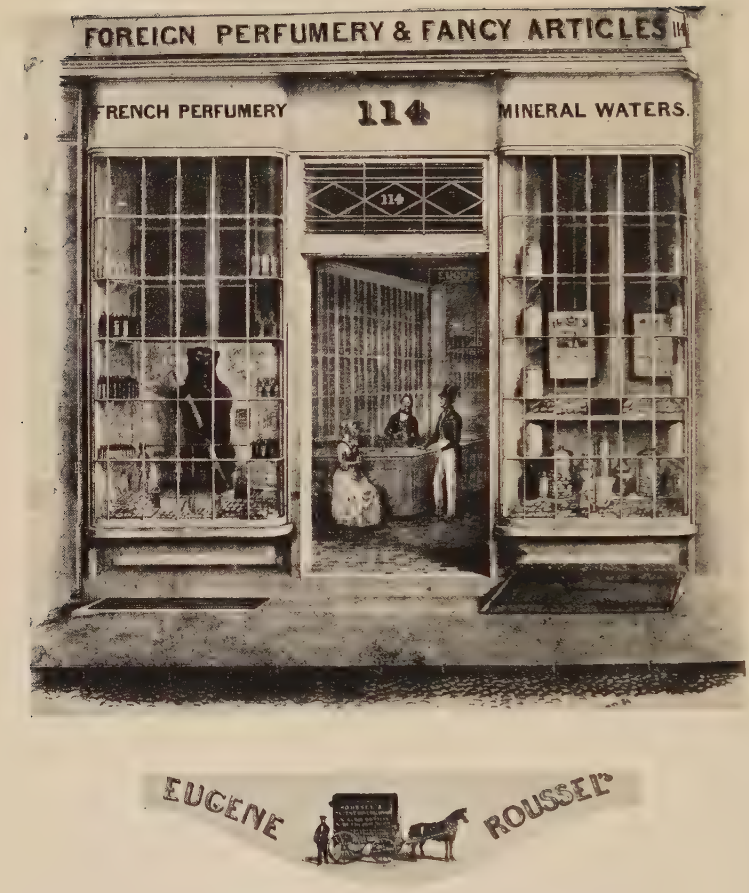
From an engraving in Godey's Lady's Book *for 1844*

A Pic-nic on the Wissahickon

Showing the effect of Romantic literature on the landscape and flora about Philadelphia in the 1840's

From Graham's Magazine *edited by Poe*

Courtesy of John T. Snyder, Esq., of Pelham, New York



A Philadelphia Shop of the Early 1840's

A typical engraved card of the era
Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Historical Society

inaudible at Washington. At last, the publishers, and the printers' union took a hand in the matter, the copyright law was changed, and the professors and critics began to proclaim a new era in American literature. The cause was so close under their noses that they had overlooked it entirely. Only the publishers knew, and with them it was a trade secret.

Despite the failure of Poe's friends to obtain a government sinecure for him by political influence, and the refusal of his publishers to bring out a new edition of his tales, there was never a time in his life when there were so few clouds visible on the horizon; when his prospects appeared so bright as in the Summer and Autumn of 1841. He was, apparently for him, fairly well; and, for the time being, he braced himself to meet the responsibilities of the new position by letting stimulants alone. He was the respected and feared editor and critic of an important, if not the most important, magazine in the country. Although comparatively poor, his home was comfortable and even pretty. Virginia's health had not yet broken fatally, and she was still able to accompany him on Sunday rambles or picnics up the Wissahickon. Above all he was growing in fame, and, for the time being, seemed surrounded by friends old and new. These delighted to gather at the Coates Street house, kept spotless by Mrs. Clemm, who managed Poe's bank account carefully.[570] She and Virginia added all they could by taking in sewing. Virginia was now eighteen, but a friend who knew her then says, "She hardly looked more than fourteen." One can see her in a poke bonnet with "her round full face and figure, pouting lips, a forehead too high and broad for beauty, and bright black eyes and ravenblack hair, contrasting almost startlingly with a white colorless complexion," [580] dressed in some simple white dress, and leaning upon Edgar's arm as he wandered with her on Sunday afternoons through the fashionable shades of Laurel Hill Cemetery, among the cypress and weeping willow trees. Other gentlemen with tall beaver hats, with other drooping ladies, also leaning upon black broadclothed arms, passed them solemnly. The birds sang and flashed from tomb to tomb. " It is a theme," says the editress of *Godey's Lady's Book,* " upon the beauties of which we could expatiate for hours " — and she did.[581]

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[580] For this, and several other remarks upon Poe's marriage and Virginia's appearance, see Mrs. Susan Archer Weiss' *Home Life of Poe.*

Summer afternoons, the gentlemen exercised their tandems about Brown's Chinese Pagoda, or there were walks to be taken over the old, arched, covered bridge (which looked like a long, badly bent canal boat with Grecian ambitions) to the Fairmount Water Works, where the white Ionic pillars were mirrored in the river and the reservoirs. Poe must have gone swimming in the river when it was hot. Virginia loved to watch him, as she did later on in New York. And there were boat trips, perhaps with the Detwilers. The family appears never to have gone to church. On " First Day " mornings (for Philadelphia kept Quaker Sabbath rather than Sunday) Poe would sometimes rise early and scull up to the then remote and rural valley of the Wissahickon to dream beside some quiet meadow bank. Of one such adventure, perhaps of many, he has left us a delightful record in —

MORNING ON THE WISSAHICCON [582]

by *Edgar A. Poe*

It was not until Fanny Kemble, in her droll book about the United States, pointed out to the Philadelphians the rare loveliness of a stream which lay at their own doors, that this loveliness was more than suspected by a few adventurous pedestrians of the vicinity. But, the *Journal* having opened all eyes, the Wissahiccon, to a certain extent, rolled at once into notoriety. I say ' to a certain extent,' for, in fact, the true beauty of the stream lies far above the *route* of the Philadelphian picturesque-hunters, who rarely proceed farther than a mile or two above the mouth of the riverlet — for the very excellent reason that here the carriage-road stops. I would advise the adventurer who would behold its finest points to take the Ridge Road, running westwardly from the city, and, having reached the second lane beyond the sixth mile-stone, to follow this lane to its termination. He will thus strike the Wissahiccon, at one of its best reaches, and, in a skiff, or by clambering along its banks, he can go up or down the stream, as best suits his fancy, and in either direction will meet his reward.

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[581] *Godey's Lady's Book,* March, 1844, page 107.

[582] From the *Opal* for 1844, an annual published by N. P. Willis. This little pseudo-pastoral of Poe's is little known.

I have already said, or should have said, that the brook is narrow. Its banks are generally, indeed, almost universally, precipitous, and consist of high hills, clothed with noble shrubbery near the water, and crowned at a greater elevation with some of the most magnificent forest trees of America . . . that define the moss covered bank, against which the pellucid water lolls its gentle flow, as the blue waves of the Mediterranean upon the steps of her palaces of marble. Occasionally in front of the cliffs, extends a small definite *plateau* of richly herbaged land, affording the most picturesque position for a cottage and garden which the richest imagination could conceive. The windings of the stream are many and abrupt, as is usually the case where banks are precipitous, and thus the impression conveyed to the voyager's eye, as he proceeds, is that of an endless succession of infinitely varied small lakes, or more properly speaking tarns. . . .

Not long ago I visited the stream by the route described, and spent the better part of a sultry day in floating in a skiff upon its bosom. The heat gradually overcame me, and resigning myself to the influence of the scenes and of the weather, and of the gently moving current, I sank into a half slumber, during which my imagination revelled in visions of the Wissachiccon of ancient days — of the 'good old days' when the Demon of the Engine was not, when picnics were undreamed of, where 'water privileges' were neither bought nor sold, and when the red man trod alone, with the elk, upon the ridges that now towered above. And, while gradually these conceits took possession of my mind, the lazy brook had borne me, inch by inch, around one promontory and within full view of another that bounded the prospect at the distance of fifty yards. It was a steep rocky cliff, abutting far into the stream, and presenting much more of the Salvator character than any portion of the shore hitherto passed. What I saw upon this cliff, although surely an object of very extraordinary nature, the place and season considered, at first neither startled nor amazed me — so thoroughly and appropriately did it chime in with the half-slumberous fancies that enwrapped me. I saw, or dreamed that I saw, standing upon the extreme verge of the precipice, with neck outstretched, with ears erect, and the whole attitude indicative of profound and melancholy inquisitiveness, one of the oldest and boldest of those identical elk which had been coupled with the red men of my vision.

I say that, for a few moments, this apparition neither startled nor amazed me. During this interval my whole soul was bound up in intense sympathy alone. I fancied the elk repining, not less than wondering, at the manifest alterations for the worse, wrought upon the brook and its vicinage, even within the last few years, by the stern hand of the utilitarian. But a slight movement of the animal's head at once dispelled the dreaminess which wrested me, and aroused me to a full sense of the novelty of the adventure. I arose upon one knee within the skiff, and while I hesitated whether to stop my career, or let myself float nearer to the object of my wonder, I heard the words 'hist! hist!' ejaculated quickly but cautiously, from the shrubbery overhead. In an instant afterward a negro emerged from the thicket, putting aside the bushes with care, and treading stealthily. He bore in one hand a quantity of salt, and, holding it towards the elk, gently yet steadily approached. The noble animal, although a little fluttered, made no attempt to escape. The negro advanced; offered the salt; and spoke a few words of encouragement or conciliation. Presently, the elk bowed and stamped, and then lay quietly down and was secured with a halter.

Thus ended my romance of the elk. It was a *pet* of great age and very domestic hotels, and belonged to an English family occupying a villa in the vicinity.

This obscure and little-known sketch of Poe's shows him in the midst of his dreams in the kind of landscape that evoked them. How great was the influence of the artists and engravers of the time upon their own generation, and more particularly upon the landscapes, descriptions of which reappear in Poe's stories, can only be understood by becoming familiar with the publications of the day. It is not an exaggeration to affirm that, through the medium of romantic art, they beheld a different world from ours; that their eyes were altered. It was the evoking of the dreams of his time in their *perfect melancholy types*, both in prose and poetry, which partly explains Poe's place in literature. The perfection of the dreams of any age is always interesting. But there is another element that enters here. The complaint about the devastating hand of the utilitarian is typical. In the march of industrialism, Poe beheld the hand that was ruining the pastoral world into which he had been born, and still loved. Chimneys were already blowing their black clouds across his valley of the many-colored grass. He was one of the first to understand their implication and to complain. Where the elk stood, is to-day a landscape that is humanly intolerable, and "progress" is still at work.

"Never sing the Three so well as when penniless," remarked Poe in a review, but his whole life was a refutation of the theory that the poet is nourished by starved muses. Comfort and prosperity, marks on the whole the most active creative period of his life.[572] Poe contributed largely to every number of *Graham's Magazine* during that time, conducted an active correspondence, and overflowed into other public prints. In the two years mentioned he turned off no less than fifty-one reviews, nine new stories, and fifteen essays; reprinted two revised poems, and published two new ones. Besides all this, there may be some still untraced items, and there are definite indications that he was at work at home on some material which followed later.

The temper of Poe's criticism in *Graham's* had not changed essentially from that contributed to the *Southern Literary Messenger* some years before. It was, to be sure, a little more urbane and a little more worldly wise — and in this more kindly attitude he was warranted — for the books which now came to his hand for review happened to be on the whole rather better than those of the previous decade. The poetry was not *quite* so saccharine, and the prose at least pretended, at times, to deal with the actual world. A review of Moore's *Alciphron* in January, 1840, showed that Poe was under the spell of the age himself and still admired one of his first masters in poetry, for he hailed it as a masterpiece.[583] Longfellow came in for praise, and condemnation as a mere copyist, while Tennyson drew forth Poe's whole admiration as the "greatest" of all English poets. It was probably more Tennyson's skill in language than his philosophy which brought forth the praise. The prose reviews ranged from Seba Smith's *Powhatan* to Macaulay's *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*. The total impression after turning over these now faded reviewer's columns dealing with for the most part forgotten books, is that a brilliant critical mind, steeped in the maxims of Coleridge, and provided with curious insight and a clever dialectic, has been compelled to waste itself upon small fry.

When the occasion offered, there was never lacking something succinct and glittering to say. Unfortunately the occasional blast of a cannon meant for battle is lost amid the sometimes petty, and often pedantic, crackle of firecrackers in which a Seba Smith goes down to a cricket's Waterloo. Poe has been blamed for descending to correct the grammar or criticize the rhetoric of those he reviewed. At the time, this was one of the most valuable and practical services which an American critic could perform for his minor contemporaries. Macaulay used it in his reviews when necessary (that of the Reverend Robert Montgomery's poems, for instance), and evinced the same anger at the vicious puffing which could project illiterate balderdash onto the library shelves of gentlemen. It was no small gain at the time to have it noised abroad that there was a critic on *Graham's* whose sense of humor and sound technique delighted in exposing the ridiculous in grammar, logic, and imagery. A study of these, and the rest of Poe's reviews, shows that from them may be culled expressions and dicta which shadow forth a critical philosophy, one of the most far ranging of its time and place. Above all they escaped the taint of being provincial, and were a genuine contribution to the body of American critical letters.

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[583] In this review Poe admired Moore's skill and "ingenuity" in the construction of a long narrative poem.

It was at this time, too, that Poe developed fully the tale of ratiocination and wrote *The Murders in the Rue Morgue, The Mystery of Marie Rogêt,* and *A Descent into the Maelström.* These stories present us with the last and most original prose hero he was to perfect, that of the Perfect Logician. In them the logical processes are stressed to the last degree.

Poe must have been considerably disturbed mentally by the kind of imagery and incident which he had found forced upon himself, by the dictates of his own nature, in the *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.* He could not help but recognize that many of the implications of these stories were distinctly abnormal, particularly those which reveled in the horrible rendings of human flesh, blood, and the strange sex or sexless relations of the heroes and heroines. He now began to struggle against this — in 1841 — when for a while the stimulants seemed temporarily to have been let alone. Most alarming of all, perhaps, had been the fact that what he had so far written seemed inevitably to be thrust upon him. Now he determined to construct logically, to pick, and to choose deliberately.

Hence, the next dream-self or literary hero, who appears, is supposedly endowed with almost superhuman reason. He is the detective by logical method, the enemy of crime. The heroes of the stories no longer indulge in cannibal feasts themselves, or the rendings of bodies, but are the hunters down and the putative preventers of such things. Indeed, says Poe to himself, in effect, such things are not done by men — and he introduces a horrible ape to perform the abominations which his consciousness still insisted upon presenting.

> The body was quite warm. Upon examining [584] it, many excoriations were perceived, no doubt occasioned by the violence with which it had been thrust up (the chimney). Upon the face were many severe scratches, and, upon the throat dark bruises, and deep indentations, of finger nails as if the deceased had been throttled to death. . . . The party made its way into a small paved yard in the rear of the building, where lay the corpse of the old lady, with her throat so entirely cut that, upon an attempt to raise her, the head fell off. The body as well as the head, was fearfully *mutilated* — the former so much so as scarcely to retain any semblance of humanity. . . .

So in a vicious circle the "expert reasoner" came around again in spite of himself to the very thing he was trying to escape — dead women, their bodies horribly mutilated. There was no way out. Yet how desperately he tried. In the quiet Coates Street house, with Virginia or Mrs. Clemm sewing before the fire, visions of scenes so terrible as to sear the minds of generations thronged through the bulging head of the young man, who inscribed them carefully, in wonderful, sonorous English on rolls of blue paper meticulously pasted together.

The bedraggled corpse of Marie Rogêt lay before him on the banks of the Seine; or an enormous ape stuffed the naked body of a young girl, bitten and excoriated, up a lethal chimney. The tell-tale heart, his own diseased and palpitating organ, beat till it almost set its unhappy owner crazy; and he could feel it in imagination, throbbing there, a complete and horrible entity below the floor. Of all these things "Muddie," poor simple "Muddie," never complained. Her needle went on, and little Sis went upstairs coughing, to go to bed with Catarina the cat.

It was certainly one of the strangest households in the world.

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[584] From *The Murders in the Rue Morgue.*

While Mrs. Clemm peeled potatoes, an ape plucked the hair off its victims. There is no use in detailing the fact that years before Poe may have read of an escaped ourang-outang in the files of an obscure Pennsylvania newspaper; or that a contemporary murder in New York filled the papers with the usual sickening details.[585] These may have pulled the trigger inside the head with the strange brain, but they do not account for the tremendous explosion which followed.

But, for the time being, the young editor at *Graham's* continued to insist that he was the *most* reasonable of men. There was no cryptogram so subtle but that he could solve it. The magnificent (though imaginary) triumph of Poe in the "challenge to the world" issued some time before in *Alexander's Weekly* was now recalled, to a larger "world." In August, 1841, Poe solved in *Graham's* a cryptogram sent him by Thomas from Washington, who replied that Poe's articles on cryptography had there attracted much attention and had even been brought to the notice of the President's sons. This, of course, with the federal job in view. (A system for the solution of puzzles might well interest the politicians!)

As a matter of fact, Poe did solve a number of cryptograms rather cleverly, and was forced to enter into an extensive correspondence with a number of people on the subject. By a wrong guess as to the author, he returned one to his friend Tomlin in Tennessee about this time and complains of the work involved. All of this was the same kind of thing that soon after entered into the exhibition of cipher solving in *The Gold Bug*. It was a mysterious realm in which he could seem to reign triumphant and alone, and so comparatively easily convince himself, and the world (for that was necessary before he could have faith in his own powers), that here was a very great reasoner indeed. There is some legend of his visiting the Harvard Library about this time to obtain texts on cryptography, but although the sources from which he drew his information are apparent, no such trip can be accounted for by time and his known whereabouts.[586]

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[585] In August, 1841, an unfortunate woman named Mary Cecilia Rogers, who lived at 114 Liberty Street, New York, was murdered under atrocious circumstances by her lover, who then committed suicide. The newspapers of the day made it their usual game. Poe's *Mystery of Marie Rogêt* was based on this crime. See Poe to Roberts, Philadelphia, June 4, 1842:

". . . I, in reality enter into a very long and rigorous analysis of the New York tragedy. No point is omitted. I examine, each by each, the opinions and arguments of the press upon the subject, and show that this subject has been, hitherto, unapproached. In fact I believe not only that I have demonstrated the fallacy of the general idea — that the girl was the victim of a gang of ruffians — but have *indicated the assassin* in a manner which will give renewed impetus to investigation. . . . It has occurred to me that you would be willing to purchase it for the forthcoming *Mammoth Notion*. . . ."! This is *all* enormously characteristic of the time and the man.

The Perfect Reasoner began very early to manifest himself on the critical side also. In February, 1841, Poe wrote a review of *Barnaby Rudge* for *Graham's* in which he undertook to predict the plot of the story which was appearing serially. In this he was successful and, it is said, caused Dickens to explain that "the man must be the devil" (*sic*). At any rate it was in *Barnaby Rudge* that Poe first met the raven which he soon afterward made his own — of the bird in *Barnaby Rudge* he says:

> The raven, too, intensely amusing as it is, might have been made, more than we now see it, a portion of the conception of the fantastic Barnaby. Its croakings might have been *prophetically* heard in the course of the drama. Its character might have performed in regard to that of the idiot, much the same part as does, in music, the accompaniment in respect to the air. Each might have been distinct. Each might have differed remarkably from the other. Yet between them there might have been wrought an analogical resemblance, and although each might have existed apart they might have formed together a whole which would have been imperfect in the absence of either.[587]

This is undoubtedly the germ of thought and the artistic philosophy out of which fluttered Poe's own "raven." Lowell noticed it in his *Fable for Critics*.[588] *The Raven*, indeed, is more logically constructed and approaches nearer to Poe's ideal of the artistic faculty in control of the logical than many of his critics are prepared to admit. Its genesis, at least, lay in an able criticism of a great book.

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[586] Howard Paul in *Munsey's Magazine*, September, 1892. Paul tells of a visit of Poe to the Harvard Library to read "Trithemus, Vignere, and Niceron" on cipher writing and says Poe had only *one* response sent in to his challenge to solve cryptograms. The first statement is unsupported, and the last demonstrably fails to convince, because of contradictory letters in Poe's correspondence: Thomas, Tomlin, Snodgrass, etc.,

[587] Poe's review of *Barnaby Rudge*, one of the most able of his criticisms.

[588] See Chapter XVII, page 402, and Chapter XXII, page 608.

There is another type of writing embodied in some of the essays and colloquies that Poe produced during the Philadelphia period, which at that time was almost peculiar to him. It is so customary to regard him as a romanticist and a lyric poet that, for the most part, his interesting speculations upon, and projections of the future; his awareness of the changes being wrought in society by medical and mechanical advance; and his dissent from the prevailing political and economic philosophy of his era, have been overlooked or forgotten. It is true that the literary form in which he chose to embody these is much less memorable than his other work, but in the study of the man they cannot be overlooked. Here, for instance, is a comment on the architecture of American cities that goes home even to-day. It is from an article entitled *The Business Man.*

> . . . Whenever a rich old hunks or prodigal heir or bankrupt corporation gets into the notion of putting up a palace, there is no such thing in the world as stopping either of them, and this every intelligent person knows. The fact in question is indeed the basis of the Eye Sore trade. As soon therefore, as a building project is fairly afoot by one of these parties, we merchants secure a nice corner of the lot in contemplation, or a prime little situation just adjoining, or right in front. This done we wait until the palace is half-way up, and then we pay some tasty architect to run us up an ornamental mud hovel, right against it; or a Down-East or Dutch pagoda, or a pig sty, or an ingenious little bit of fancy work, either Esquimeau, Kickapoo, or Hottentot.

"I am a business man. I am a methodical man. Method is *the* thing, after all" — begins this article.

As we have seen, he was peculiarly obsessed with, and convinced of, the possibility of human flight. The dirigible balloon was much on his mind. He even foresaw the skyscraper and speaks of the "twenty story" buildings in Manhattan. In predicting many changes in the physical aspect of civilization he was often most happy in his guesses, sometimes coming startlingly close to present facts, but unlike nearly everyone else at that time he did not believe in the inevitable benefits of "progress," and saw the opening and raw seams in a society which was built purely upon material welfare. "Comfort" he did not regard as the final ideal. The absence of an aristocracy as a guide to taste he lamented — in *The Philosophy of Furniture* he says:

> We have no aristocracy of blood, and having therefore as a natural, and indeed as an inevitable thing, fashioned for ourselves an aristocracy of dollars, the *display of wealth* has here to take the place and perform the office of the heraldic display in monarchial countries. By a transition readily understood, and which might have been as readily foreseen, we have been brought to merge in simple *show* our notions of taste itself.

More remarkable still is the fact that Poe was practically the only American writer of his age who foresaw some of the inevitable weaknesses inherent in the democratic theory and boldly commented upon them. Up until the Civil War, the doctrines of the Revolution were practically unquestioned. In *Mellonta Tauta,* a conversation supposed to take place in A.D. 2848, Poe makes the following observations on democracy in the United States:

> . . . They started with the queerest idea conceivable, viz: that all men are born free and equal — this in the very teeth of the laws of *gradation* so visibly impressed upon all things both in the moral and physical universe. Every man 'voted,' as they called it — that is to say meddled with public affairs — until, at length, it was discovered that what is everybody's business is nobody's, and that the 'Republic' (so the absurd thing was called) was without a government at all. It is related, however, that the first circumstance which disturbed, the self-complacency of the philosophers who constructed this 'Republic,' was the startling discovery that universal suffrage gave opportunity for fraudulent schemes, by means of which any desired number of votes might at any time be polled, without the possibility of prevention or even detection, by any party which should be merely villainous enough not to be afraid of the fraud. A little reflection upon this discovery suffered to render evident the consequences, which were that rascality *must* predominate — in a word, that republican government *could* never be anything but a rascally one. While the philosophers, however, were busied in blushing at their stupidity in not having foreseen these inevitable evils, and intent upon the invention of new theories, the matter was put to an abrupt issue by a fellow of the name of *Mob,*

> who took everything into his own hands and set up a despotism, in comparison with which those of the fabulous Zeros and Hellofagabaluses were respectable and delectable. This Mob (a foreigner, by-the-by) is said to have been the most odious of all men that ever encumbered the earth. He was a giant in stature — insolent, rapacious, filthy; had the gall of a bullock with the heart of an hyena and the brains of a peacock. He died, at length, by dint of his own energies, which exhausted him. . . .

by which it is plain to be seen that the magic of the ballot box had little attraction for Poe.

Although Poe has been accused of "dabbling in science," his interest and speculations about it were at least a half century in advance of his time:

> Last night had a fine view of Alpha Lyrae, whose disk, through our captain's spy glass, subtends an angle of half a degree (*Poe supposes the drift of the solar system toward this star produced this result*) looking very much as our sun does to the naked eye on a misty day. Alpha Lyrae although so *very* much larger than our sun, by-the-by, resembles him closely as regards its spots, its atmosphere, and in many other particulars. It is only within the last century, Pundit tells me, that the binary relation existing between these two orbs began to be suspect. . . .[589]

That in the 1840's Poe should suggest in a popular magazine that the sun spot periods and atmosphere of the stars might serve to relate them to our own sun, is little short of startling. It was a theory which even astronomers had only begun to discuss.[590] Although not original with him, he was quick to grasp its immense significance, when few, very few indeed, knew what he was talking about. In other words, Poe was one of the first of our literary men really to have his imagination stirred by science. He predicts the trans-oceanic telegraph and wandered strangely in the realms of galvanic resuscitation. For him, almost alone as a writer, electricity *was* in the air.

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[589] During the year 1840–41 occurred the longest sun spot in the annals of astronomy. This lasted eighteen months. About the same time Schwabe was conducting his inquiry into the periodicity of sun spots. In 1843 he announced his discovery of the average period of 11.13 years. Discussion was therefore going on in scientific publications about sun spots in the early '40s.

[590] "The sun-spot curve (period) . . . resembles the light curve of the average variable star of long period . . . from the researches of Abbot . . . the total radiation of the sun varies, in amount, and as a consequence *the sun must be regarded as a variable star of long period.*" *Eclipses of the Sun,* S. A. Mitchell, pages 119–120.

Of the poetry of the Philadelphia period, there is not much to say. *To Helen* and *Israfel,* the latter again improved, were both again republished. *The Island of the Fay* is obviously a study for *The Landscape Garden. The Raven,* either in mind or on paper, was already under way. It probably first began to take on a vague form at the Coates Street house. Otherwise there was small time to dabble in verse, his most loved form of expression.

One of the peculiar features of this period was Poe's return to his youth for source material. Pauline Dubourg, the washerwoman in *The Murders of the Rue Morgue,* was the name of a former schoolteacher in London.[115] *The Man of the Crowd* reveals impressions of the visit to London with the Allans, as does *Why the Little Frenchman Wears his Hand in a Sling."* [557] *The Gold Bug* was soon to revive with startling detail the army experience on Sullivan's Island in 1827–28, and *The Literary Life of Thingum Bob, Esq.,* is in part Richmond and *Ellis & Allan* bought to life. *William Wilson* was, of course, an " allegory " of English school days and the self-conflict in Poe's dual nature, in some places literally delineated.[122] Besides this, there were numerous other lapses of the pen into the man's past. The distinct trace of opium in the confusion of the senses (taste and smell) meets us startlingly in *Monos and Una.*[591] There is direct evidence by Poe's cousin, Miss Herring, that, soon after he wrote this, August, 1841, he was using opium to excess.

But there was still another important characteristic present in his writings, which provides a convenient loophole to the man's soul — it is what made him laugh. Edgar Allan Poe, like most essentially egotistic people, had a private sense of humor. He seemed to regard the world from an immense pinnacle, on an assumed basis of superiority necessary to his own comfort, from which the race of men resembled some grotesque inhabitants of a planet about which he was curious, but not sympathetic. From time to time he descended amongst this race of flies, who had stung him, and broke their bones, or otherwise hurt them. This was partly abnormal, and partly in revenge for his own troubles.[592]

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[591] From the *Colloquy of Monos and Una:*

" . . . Volition had not departed but was powerless. The senses were unusually active, although eccentrically so, assuming often each other's functions at random. The taste and smell were inextricably confounded, and became one sentiment, abnormal and intense. . . ." The rest of the description amounts to a delineation of the symptoms of a drug addict. Compare this description of Poe's with Baudelaire's descriptions of opium dreams. See especially *Baudelaire, A Study,* Arthur Symons; also *Les Paradis Artificiels Opium et Hashchîsch* by Charles Baudelaire, Paris, 1864.

There are, also, those stories in which Poe takes a delight in mystifying and cheating his fellow men. *Diddling considered as one of the Exact Sciences* is a case in point. Such imaginings helped his sense of inferiority and allowed him a laugh all by himself. In perusing those pages, others find it hard to join in the mirth because the writer seems to take an unholy joy in the weakness and the ignorance of his fellow men. There is too sardonic a gusto about it all. A large part of Poe's satire is directed against the literary and journalistic sentimentality of his time. This would be well enough, but there is no æsthetic moral involved in his viewpoint. " Look at these poor fools," says Poe in effect — " and despise them." The tongue in the cheek forever precludes a smile, and we are simply wearied.

Poe's humor generally falls flat and constitutes one of his great failures. Part of this failure, at the present time, is due to the fact that the conventions of wit have largely changed since his day. Wit, like other things, goes in fashion, and the wit of Poe's day is not that of ours. He laughed in the convention of *Southern* wit, which in a *literary* form has nearly always congealed in the bandyings of " jokes " that rest upon puerile pedantries in which only the classically learned are supposed to be initiates. Often it was based upon a comedy of manners that no longer exists. The semi-classical names, strangely compounded, assumed by *literati;* an enormous delight in the absurdities of bombastic verbosity, were its distinguishing marks. There are, about the mossy cloisters of some Southern universities, a few professors who still indulge in this convention in their communications and mimic battles with the great unknown wits of their section. To modern ears the jargon is unintelligible. It is the thin snickering of ghosts.

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[592] " And he (Poe) remains still a kind of enigma; . . . yes, enigmatical in various points: as to his not giving even the breath of life to the few ghosts of women who cross his pages; of never diving very deeply into any heart but his own, Are not most of his men malign, perverse, atrocious, abnormal, never quite normal, evocations of himself? From Dupin to Fortunato, from the Man of the Crowd to the Man in the Pit, from Prince Prosfew to Usher, are not these *revenants,* in the French sense? " Arthur Symons, *Baudelaire, A Study,* page 43.

Yet Poe himself satirized this type of humor in the opening of *The Tales of the Folio Club,* which cleverly enough took off the proceedings of certain gentlemen in Baltimore who met at the "Tusculum" and invited Lord Byron to become an honorary member of their pompous circle, without receiving a reply. The gentlemen were too steeped in their own gravy to detect its musty aroma.

But there was something more than this. To Poe, all the world was grotesque. He viewed it from an immense distance and all the actions of all its funny little ephemera were alike mechanical to him. To the normal man, such a view is horrible, and there laughter ends. But to Poe it was funny. It fed his sense of importance. Everything grinned at him and gesticulated in a distorted glass at the end of the enormous perspective of a telescope reversed — and *he* laughed. His sorrow and pity were peculiarly private as well as his humor. In short he could only be sorry for himself. In the fate of humanity he saw his own predicament, but it was over his own, and not theirs which he lyrically mourned. In Philadelphia this culminated in *The Masque of the Red Death,* and later on, in the vision of the world as a cemetery where the corpses writhed in their tombs (*Premature Burial*). Yet about it all there was an ecstasy, a satisfaction in the triumph of death and the feast which follows, that has lent these compositions the reality of the horrors they depict. The ruthlessness of nature has been dramatically and successfully evoked. The curious thing is, that Poe could be ecstatic about it, and so endow it with poetic life. That he both entices and repulses is the peculiar quality of his own horror, humor, pity — and genius.

There has seldom, if ever, been in the annals of English literature so contradictory a nature as Poe's. If he dreamed terrible things, he also dreamed surpassingly beautiful ones; and he blent both horror and beauty so that, by the strange chemistry of his nature, they became one. This is his great triumph, the strange aspect of beauty that he constantly insists upon. There are few, however, who can successfully appropriate this Baconian formula. It is only similar natures that can mix them with like result.

By the end of 1841, it had become amply evident to Poe that Mr. Graham was not going to support him in starting a new magazine and abandon an already successful enterprise. Nor would he allow Poe a proprietary share in a harvest which had proved so unexpectedly rich. Mr. Graham was of a nature so easy and affable that there was no excuse for even Poe to quarrel with him, and Graham was above many of the petty devices for annoyance by which Mr. Burton had moved his former assistant's contempt. Nevertheless, the refusal to back Poe in a new venture, or to give him a share in the magazine which he had so largely built up, constituted, at least in the mind of the young editor, a violation of the fundamental part of their agreement.

It is altogether likely that Graham was loath to part with a man who was able to increase his subscription list at the rate of several thousand a month, yet Poe on his part was dissatisfied, and was, no doubt, at times his usual overbearing self. The acid in his criticism always worried those *for* whom he wrote as well as those *at* whom he wrote.

Then, during the early months of the new year, an event transpired in the bosom of Poe's home circle which once again induced him to relapse into those irregularities the causes of which were so complex. The comparative good health and abstinence of a year were now about to end, and the beginning of the final descent into the maelstrom was soon under way. The immediate and tragic cause of the disasters which followed must now be related.

CHAPTER XXI

Spring Garden Street

ONE evening towards the end of January, 1842, the twentieth, there was a small party gathered for the evening at Poe's Coates Street house. There was a coal fire, and Mrs. Clemm, with the cat following her about, was preparing to preside at the coffee urn in which she delighted, and to dispense some simple evening hospitality while Eddie read or talked. The birds were asleep, with a cloth drawn over their cage. Virginia, as she often did, was to provide the music for the occasion. Poe took a special pride in this, as he had taught her nearly all the simple accomplishments that she knew — a little French and some songs. The harp was brought out, and the girl-wife with the large bright eyes and the waxen face ran her childish hands over the wires and began to sing. There was something peculiarly angelic and ethereal about this sight of Virginia playing the harp in the parlor by her own fireside, that almost transported Poe. She was delicately, morbidly angelic. Everybody noticed that, and upon such occasions her voice came to him like that of " Ligeia " or " Eleonora " speaking to him in his most paradisical dreams. It was indeed her voice that gave a color to them all. Dressed in white, singing in the glow of the lamplight, she became the personification of a Victorian heroine.

The notes mounted higher, very true and clear — suddenly she stopped, clutched her throat, and a wave of crimson rushed down over her breast. Poe — all of them sprang to her.[593] For a while it seemed certain that she must die. Stained with her life blood, he carried her upstairs and laid her on her bed. While Mrs. Clemm wrung out cold cloths, and used her simple housewife skill, Eddie went for the doctor.

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[593] Poe's cousins, the Herrings, formerly of Baltimore, had come to live in Philadelphia sometime in 1840 or 1841. See Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, appendix, page 429. She, Mrs. Warner, formerly Miss Herring, then a widow, had gone to live with her father in Philadelphia and met Virginia and Mrs. Clemm unexpectedly one day on Chestnut Street. The Herrings were present on the evening when the misfortune overtook Virginia. The account comes from them, and from Poe's own letter of January 4, 1848, — Ingram, I, page 215. Partly quoted here, page 521. There are also accounts by a neighbor of the Poes at Fordham, of a similar attack of Virginia's in 1847, see page 716, Chapter XXIII.

It was a trip clear across town. Dr. John Kearsley Mitchell lived at 228 Chestnut Street. He must have found a frantic young man pulling at his brass bell-knob that January night, and have driven back to Coates Street madly. No doubt before the lights on the river came into view again, and they drew up at the white doorstep of the little house, an eternity had passed for Poe. His sanity was, in a peculiar way, bound up with the life of Virginia. She embodied, for him, the only possible physical compromise with reality, in a sexual predicament so complex and subtle that it can scarcely be understood in all its vital ramifications. The very thought of losing her was a species of madness. He had always feared it and trembled. Now that the first unmistakable scarlet flag of danger had been displayed, the world seemed to reel and the sky to totter.

This fatal warning at the evening party in January, 1842, marked not only the beginning of the end for Virginia, but nervous disorganization for Poe. Dr. Mitchell in reality had two patients on his hands, and, as a matter of fact, found Poe's condition more perplexing than his wife's, whose complaint, if then incurable, was at least not a puzzle to diagnose.[594] There are indications that, from this time on, things began to go awry at the office. Mr. Poe was often "irregular" and now again began to drink. Virginia continued to have relapses, each one of which drove her husband to despair. He would go out, take a drink, and sometimes be absent for days. Towards the end of the Winter these periods were evidently frequent. There was an attack of his old heart trouble in the Spring. Mr. Graham was forced to call in outside editorial help. It was Griswold.

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[594] The attitude of the age toward tuberculosis is now almost impossible to understand. All its *symptoms* were delicate, poetic, and fashionable. The disease itself was, like cancer, then considered shameful and only mentioned by a pretty name. One went into a fashionable "decline," which was later whispered to be "consumption." Paradoxically it was something to be proud and ashamed of at the same time. It is forgotten attitudes like this that explain and govern the lives of humanity, and remain enigmas to other epochs.

Of the cause of the resort to stimulants which, from now on, more or less beset him, Poe wrote in 1848 in answer to a friend who had questioned him about the "irregularities":

> You say, Can you *hint* to me what was the 'terrible evil' which caused the 'irregularities,' so profoundly lamented? Yes, I can do more than hint. This 'evil' was the greatest that can befall a man. Six years ago (*1842*) a wife, whom I loved as no man ever loved before, ruptured a blood-vessel in singing. Her life was despaired of. I took leave of her forever, and underwent all of the agonies of her death. She recovered partially and I again hoped. At the end of a year, the vessel broke again. I went through precisely the same scene. . . . Then again — again — and even again at varying intervals. Each time I felt the agonies of her death — and at each succession of the disorder I loved her more dearly and clung to her life with more desperate pertinacity. But I am constitutionally sensitive — nervous in a very unusual degree. I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity. During these fits of absolute unconsciousness, I drank — God only knows how often or how much. As a matter of course, my enemies referred the insanity to the drink, rather than the drink to the insanity. I had, indeed, nearly abandoned all hope of a permanent cure, when I found one in the *death* of my wife. This I can endure as becomes a man. It was the horrible, never-ending oscillations between hope and despair which I could *not* longer have endured, without total loss of reason. In the death of what was my life, then, I received a new but — Oh, God! — how melancholy an existence.[595]

As a matter of fact he never did attain a "permanent cure"; the descent, from 1842 on, was at a constantly accelerated rate.

Poe had become acquainted with a young lawyer of a pleasing and endearing personality, but with rather eccentric habits. This friend was Henry Beck Hirst, whose law office was on Prince Street. Poe was much interested in copyright law at that time, a subject which he and Thomas mention occasionally in their correspondence, so Poe spent a great deal of time at Hirst's office. His interest in copyright arose from the international situation, then as now far from satisfactory, but infinitely worse then, as the rights of both English and American authors in the "other man's country " were mutually and inevitably disregarded by the publishers.[596] Poe was always anxious to publish in England. His experience with the English edition of *Arthur Gordon Pym* had been a case in point, and he may have had some sort of a clandestine arrangement for articles with the *Edinburgh Review* or *Blackwood's*.[597] Besides all this, it was noised about that Charles Dickens was coming to Philadelphia in March, 1842. Poe intended to see Dickens, hoping to gain his help in placing a book of collected stories in London, while at the same time he thought to secure his aid in agitating for better international copyright conditions.

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[595] Ingram, I, page 215 — Poe to Eveleth.

There must have been much more behind all this than the mere references in correspondence indicate. Poe undoubtedly devoted much time to informing himself about the legal status of copyright. The publishing aspects were only too well known to him already. He seems to have had some idea of persuading Thomas and others to use their influence in getting a new copyright bill through Congress. Mr. Kennedy, of course, would be asked to help. Nor was this entirely visionary. With the editorial influence Poe had, and his knowledge of newspaper manipulating for his own ends, something might really have been done. The upshot of all this sudden interest in law was that Poe found himself thrown quite frequently with the decidedly interesting young

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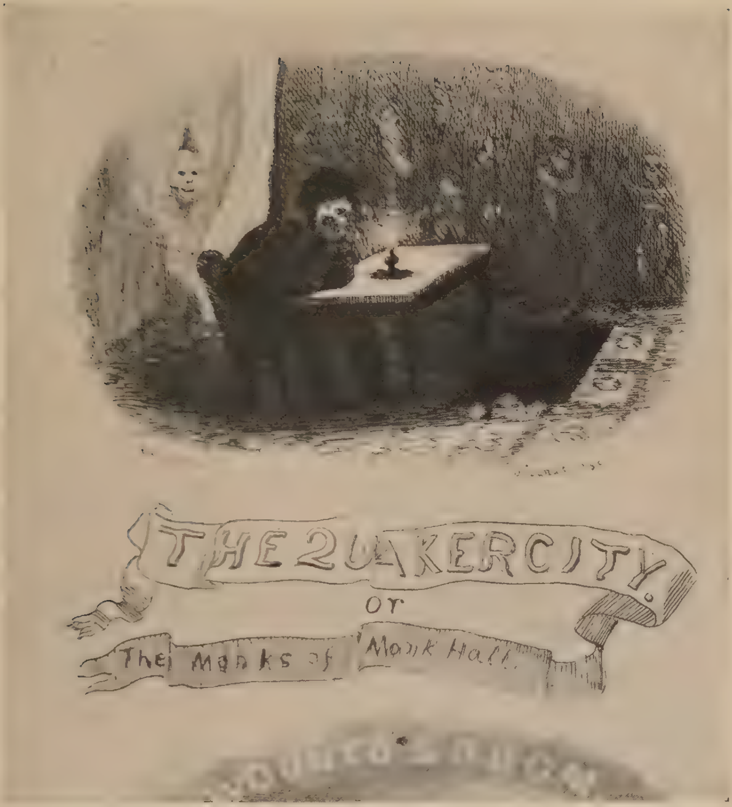
[596] Over 15,000 copies of Macaulay's *History of England* had been sold in the United States without any return to the author. Macaulay made a famous speech in Parliament which secured the English Copyright Act of 1842. In the same year an attempt was made to get Congress to change the American copyright law, but in vain. The matter was much in the air. Such men as Poe and Charles Dickens who understood the importance of the measure were vitally interested in having adequate laws and international agreement. See the account of Poe's interview with Dickens on page 529. Dickens' letters to Lea & Blanchard in *Mathew Carey*, Bradsher, Columbia University Press, appendix IX.

[597] The evidence for this rests upon Poe's own statements in his correspondence, and upon certain articles on international copyright in English magazines, anonymous but apparently from his pen. See Poe to Snodgrass, September 11, 1839, and June 7, 1841. Mention of being in touch with Disraeli — Poe to Cooke, September 21, 1839. In notes furnished to Griswold, March 29, 1841, Poe says " [I] lately have written articles continuously for two British journals whose names I am not permitted to mention." Prof. Wilson *may have* brought some of these out in *Blackwood's Magazine* as anonymous pseudo-editorial matter on copyright (*sic*).



THE QUAKER CITY.
or
The Monks of Monk Hall.

The Title Page to one of George Lippard's Philadelphia Novels

LIPPARD was a friend of POE in Philadelphia, and later on, in 1849, helped to save his life. Such books as LIPPARD's uncover a forgotten vein in American Romantic-Gothic novels and stories that help to explain the contemporary literary atmosphere in which POE lived

law student. For such Hirst was when the two first met in November, 1841.

Henry B. Hirst was by no means absorbed by the law. His family — whom he afterwards alienated by an unwelcome marriage — seems to have been moderately well off, and Henry found himself more interested in studying birds, collecting their nests and eggs, and writing poetry, than in memorizing what Mr. Blackstone has to say about torts. He was much given to rambling about the country.

Hirst was a friend of George Lippard, a young Philadelphia eccentric of the day, who wore his hair in long shaggy locks. He dressed in a blue coat buttoned tight at the waist, and flourished a scalloped velvet collar in total disregard of prevailing fashions.

It was Lippard's custom, by night, to shelter in a large abandoned building near Franklin Square, whose one hundred vacant rooms were open to various types of tenants by squatters' right. Lippard used to sleep there with his head on a carpetbag and imagine terrible things. He called the place " Monk's Hall " and wrote a mad " Gothic " romance about it in which skulls grinned, hooded figures vanished up halls, and strange, coffin-like shadows lay upon the moonlit floor.[598]

Conditions under the blind and stolid respectability of Philadelphia were then, as now, surprising to the respectable. From his house at Apple Street, near Jefferson, Lippard poured forth novels and plays characterizing the city as " Wounto's Sodom," stories which aroused howls of protest, and a mob headed by the mayor to stop a play. This " young petrel who swooped, gyrated and cut his circles over the roofs and chimney tops of Philadelphia, sailing up the Wissahickon and down the Brandywine, now scouting its romantic history and now its foolishness and vice, was as odd a creature as is known to the literary annals of the neighborhood."[599] We must leave him being married in

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[598] See illustrations of title page, page 522. These stories of Lippard's represented a *tendency* in the literature of the time which left its trace on Poe in a vague way.

[599] The description is taken from L. P. Oberholtzer's *Literary History of Philadelphia*.

Indian costume by moonlight on the Wissahickon. Through Hirst, it is likely that Lippard first met Poe. In a way they were three of a kind.

It was Hirst's custom to visit Joseph Bonaparte, the ex-King of Spain, at his home in exile near Trenton, where, for a time, the young lawyer was welcome. Hirst mixed drinks excellently well and knew good wine, which seems to have been the ostensible cause of both his friendship and sudden parting with Napoleon's brother, and others. He and Poe used to drop in frequently at John Sartain's printing office. Sartain drank absinthe, Hirst loved brandy, so these late parties of the artist-engraver, the mad young bird-nesting law student, and the author of *The Raven* undoubtedly caused " Muddie " considerable alarm.[600]

Next to F. W. Thomas, Hirst was the closest friend that Poe had in the Philadelphia days. Thomas lived in Washington, and the touch with him was mainly by letters, or much enjoyed but rare visits. Just as Poe had rambled about Baltimore with Wilmer, he now did the same with Hirst around Philadelphia, walking out towards Doylestown, where buttonless Dunkards and bearded Moravians passed along the pike in long, canvas-covered wagons, the buckets slung beneath, while the two young men talked poetry and literature, and rambled.

The Raven, it seems, which was now under way, was much discussed. Some of its ideas and figures must have been thrashed out between them. Hirst, whose mind gradually became befuddled by drink, recalling those excursions afterward, " remembered " that it was he who had " written " it. This he stubbornly maintained in after years, and since his close association with Poe was well known to many persons in Philadelphia, there were, as usual, a few to be found who pitied him and believed. John Sartain, who also saw Poe in a period of madness, had a somber last recollection of Hirst, poor, and wrecked mentally and physically, trying to write a line of poetry in a half-witted and muttering way.

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[600] *Poe in Philadelphia,* by Alexander Harvey, the *Press* (Philadelphia), Sunday, June 19, 1892. Sartain contributed reminiscences to the author of this article, who also had considerable local knowledge about Hirst.

The only certain recollection of the conversations that took place upon these excursions and rambles, comes from the pen of Poe himself in his sketch of Henry B. Hirst.[601] Finding some secluded nook, the two young poets would read their poetry to each other. Poe was especially fond of Hirst's little poem about *The Owl:*

When twilight fades and evening falls
  Alike on tree and tower,
And Silence like a pensive maid,
  Walks round each slumbering bower;
When fragrant flowerets fold their leaves,
  And all is still in sleep,
The hornéd owl on moonlit wing
  Flies from the donjon keep.

And he calls aloud — 'too-whit! too-whoo!'
  And the nightingale is still.
And the pattering step of the hurrying hare
  Is hushed upon the hill:
And he crouches low in the dewy grass
  As the lord of the night goes by,
Not with a lordly whirring wing
  But like a lady's sigh.

Hares, donjon keeps, and nightingales are rarely met with about Philadelphia — yet there is a "pensive charm" about these lines that gives one a glimpse of a wistful, weak young law student reciting them hopefully to his critical friend as they sauntered in chestnut shade down some lane out Westchester way. "No one," says Poe, moved by the memories of those times — even after a quarrel with his friend — "No one, but a poet at heart could have conceived these images, and they are embodied with much skill."

It was in all probability on these rambles with Hirst that the "Raven" first began to croak his "Nevermore," for Poe had then lately discovered him in *Barnaby Rudge*. Hirst on his part read his own poetry to Poe. Some of the poems of both young men, when they were published a few years later, bore indubitable evidence of their authors' close association. Hirst closed the last stanza of his long poem of *Endymion,* which he published complete in *Graham's* for January, 1844, with the following lines:

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[601] *Henry B. Hirst*, by E. A. Poe. See *Poe's Collected Works* in four volumes, vol. III, pages 209–12, W. J. Widdleton, New York, 1868. Much is to be gathered from this sketch, especially between the lines.

Both hands upon his brow — terror, and sadness
And horror in his eyes, with speechless face,
He pierced the depths of space,
Glaring, like one struck dumb with sudden madness,
While in the distance died that sad " For ever!
For ever and for ever! "

In the *Southern Literary Messenger* for July, 1844, Hirst published the first canto of *Endymion,* which shows that the poem was already under way some time before, during his association with Poe.

The admirably contrasted figures of " Astarte " and " Dian," which Poe afterwards used in *Ulalume,* seem also in a general way to be traceable to Hirst. In Hirst's *Endymion* " Dian " shines approvingly on the hero of the poem. " Venus " and " Dian " are, however, identified in canto I, stanza 20 of *Endymion,* quoted by Poe. The idea of contrasting the two ideas, and using " Astarte " as a personification of lust, while " Dian represents a noble and chaste love, the central theme in *Ulalume,* may have been suggested to Poe by Thomas Holley Chivers' poem of *Nacoochie,* where such a contrast of the two actually occurs. Hirst, however, closes his *Coming of the Mammoth* volume with a sonnet called *Astarte* that contains both " Astarte " and " Dian," and Poe noticed this sonnet particularly, toward the close of his review of the *Mammoth* in 1845, shortly before *Ulalume* appears to have been written.

In 1849 Hirst published a volume of poems called *The Pennance of Roland.* In this book, in a poem called *Berenice* (on page 99), a poet lies at his lady's feet and gazes at

The radiant glory of a face
Which even in dreams adorns the Italian skies
Of passionate love, — the Astarte of their space!

On the very next page —

We'd pause, entranced by Dian's amber light.

It it very difficult to tell in this case whether Poe was borrowing from Hirst, or Hirst from Poe. *Ulalume* had been published by 1849. On the other hand, *The Pennance of Roland* is full of Poeisms, and in the poem of that name published in *Graham's* January, 1848, Hirst actually " lifted " phrases from *Lenore,* and embodied the demon eye of the " Raven," and the apostrophe to the bird. Hirst had already complained in an anonymous article in the *Philadelphia Saturday Courier* of Poe's borrowing from his *Endymion.* Poe, in 1845, had made a similar complaint of Hirst in the *Broadway Journal.* Thus the unfortunate controversy continued. Poe made the nature of his borrowing sufficiently clear in the sketch he did of Hirst. It was the old story, genius had appropriated from mediocrity and created something immortal; mediocrity went muttering to its grave, forgotten except for the vital contact. " To be a good imitator of Henry B. Hirst," said Poe with his tongue in his cheek, " is quite honor enough for *me.*"[601]

But in Philadelphia their rambles went on for two or three years. They continued firm friends; sipped absinthe with John Sartain; forgathered at Hirst's little law office on Prince Street; drank brandy; read copyright law or poetry — and talked. On Sunday mornings, Hirst repaired to Poe's little house near Spring Garden Street for breakfast. There is one record of an especially sumptuous repast on potted Delaware shad and baked potatoes, while " Muddie " supplied the plates of smoking Maryland waffles.

Early in March, 1842, when Poe's relations with Mr. Graham were beginning to get involved, Charles Dickens came to Philadelphia to lecture and stopped at a then famous hostelry which displayed the screaming eagle, he so much detested, as its sign. It was the old *United States Hotel* on Chestnut Street. Dickens' immense popularity in America can scarcely be understood, now, by a generation which reads him little except at school. Reading aloud after supper was then, with family prayers, the regular routine of hundreds of thousands of firesides where the grown-ups gathered about the hearth eagerly, and the children laughed and sobbed over "Little Dorrit," " Tiny Tim," and " Oliver Twist."

There were literally thousands of persons who had pages of Dickens by heart. His advent on the western side of the Atlantic was more of a triumph than a tour. Men, women, and children loved the man who had conjured for them, as no one else has ever done in English prose.

Poe could not have been so ardent an admirer of some one else's work, but he did not neglect the opportunity of making himself known. He wrote to Dickens at the *United States Hotel,* enclosing his forecast of the plot in the review of *Barnaby Rudge,* together with the two volumes of his published *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.* Mr. Dickens was interested and immediately replied:

> *United States Hotel, March* 6, 1842
>
> My dear Sir, — I shall be very glad to see you whenever you will do me the favor to call. I think I am more likely to be in the way between half past eleven and twelve than at any other time. I have glanced over the books you have been so kind as to send me, and more particularly at the papers to which you called my attention. I have the greater pleasure in expressing my desire to see you on this account. Apropos of the 'construction' of *Caleb Williams,* do you know that Godwin wrote it *backwards,* the last volume first, — and that when he had produced the hunting dream of Caleb and the catastrophe, he waited for months, casting about for a means of accounting for what he had done?
>
> Faithfully yours always,
> Charles Dickens

It is probable that, in his letter to Dickens asking for the interview, Poe alluded to a similarity between the man hunt in the Gordon Riots at the end of *Barnaby Rudge* and a scene in Godwin's novel. Dickens says "*apropos*" of *Caleb Williams.* It was characteristic of Poe that he could always find "the similarity" — that was annoying — but it always secured attention. Even Charles Dickens seated before his coal fire at the *United States Hotel,* eating Philadelphia scrappel, which he called, "a kind of black pudding," blinked at the "similarity" as he opened his morning mail and read the beautiful, clear handwriting of "your obedient servant, Edgar Allan Poe." Here was a young Yankee it might be well to meet. Poe had two long interviews.

Faithfully Yours

Charles Dickens

The famous English novelist about the time of his interviews with Poe in Philadelphia at the United States Hotel

From an engraving of a portrait D. Maclise, A. R. A. issued by Lea and Blanchard in 1840

Courtesy of the Edgar Allan Poe Shrine, Richmond, Virginia

Henry W. Longfellow

In 1842; about the time of his correspondence with POE about contributing to *Graham's Magazine*

From "Our Contributor's" in Graham's

Plate supplied by the Edgar Allan Poe Shrine, Richmond, Virginia

Dickens had suffered greatly from having his work pirated in America. Philadelphia, with its many publishers, was one of the most offending of localities, so the malodorous condition of international copyright was much on his mind. The conversation between him and Poe turned on that matter and Poe's hope of obtaining recognition in England. He asked Dickens's aid in placing a volume in London which the latter promised willingly.[602] Evidently the big-bearded man with the deep eyes, bright green necktie slipped through a diamond ring under the then unusual stiff linen collar, and a velvet vest with a gold chain and cameo charm dangling across it,[603] found the young man with the olive complexion, the raven black hair, scrupulously brushed and oiled beaver hat, and mended gloves, an interesting person. Poe came back again to talk with his friend in the dressing-gown with quilted violet facings, probably to impress further the importance of his work on the Englishman. There was also some talk of Tennyson, and Poe read a poem by Emerson. Dickens was impressed, he never forgot Poe, and on his second visit looked up Mrs. Clemm in Baltimore after Poe had died.[604]

Since their realms of imagination and interest were worlds apart, it seems a strange quirk of fate that Charles Dickens should have suggested *The Raven* to Edgar Allan Poe.

Dickens's own visit was only an interlude, however important, in a time of general disintegration for Poe. Through the entire Spring of 1842, Virginia's condition was most precarious, and this was reflected in Poe's conduct. By April, matters had almost come to an impasse with Graham. There is no doubt that Poe was exceptionally hard to get along with at this time. Charles Peterson, who was a man of considerable vigor, and felt his subordinate position in the office at times keenly, became engaged in an argument with Poe one day while Mr. Graham was present.[605] This brought matters to a climax. Although Mr. Graham, in later defending Poe from Griswold's ruthless attacks, softened the story down, he is known to have told a friend, Professor A. H. Smyth of Philadelphia, that he discharged Poe, and he confirmed the statement later to Mr. Sartain saying, "Either Peterson or Poe would have to go — the two could not get along together." [600]

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[602] Later on in the Summer of 1842 Poe became impatient at not hearing from Dickens on the subject, and appears to have written him again in care of Putnam's, just before Dickens left New York. Dickens did not receive the letter until sometime later in England, when he replied, November 27, 1842, saying he had never forgotten his promise. He tried in vain, with Moxon, to place some work of Poe's, probably the *Tales* — "I have mentioned it to publishers with whom I have influence, but they have, one and all, declined the venture. . . . Do not for a moment suppose that I have ever thought of you but with a pleasant recollection; and that I am not at all times prepared to forward your views in this country . . ." etc. See Woodberry, 1909, vol. I, pages 328–29.

[603] Description of Dickens taken from a portrait of him painted in Philadelphia.

[604] See Chapter XVII, page 402.

The truth is Mr. Graham was most loath to part with Poe. He understood the cause of his editor's troubles, and was in all ways most sympathetic. Although there was certainly a great disappointment on Poe's part, and dissatisfaction with Mr. Graham for not carrying out his promise to help found the new magazine, yet there was never any personal quarrel between them as there had been with Burton. The parting resembled more the parting with Mr. White of the *Messenger* some years before. Throughout Virginia's illness, the Grahams remained solicitous, calling with the carriage and the greys to take her out riding. This reminiscence of Mr. Graham's probably belongs to 1842.

> I rode out one summer evening with them, and the remembrance of his watchful eyes, eagerly bent upon the slightest change of line in that loved face, haunts me yet as the memory of a sad strain. It was this hourly anticipation of her loss that made him a sad and thoughtful man, and lent a mournful melody to his 'undying song.' [*i.e.*, the theme of the "Lost Beloved."]

One day in April, when Poe came to the office after an absence, he found the Reverend Rufus Griswold occupying the editorial chair. Poe took the situation in at a glance, turned on his heel and never entered the place again.

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[605] Some doubt has been cast on this, as on May 31, 1842, Peterson wrote to Lowell: "Poe is a splendid fellow, but as unstable as water." Something had evidently occurred to call for faint praise. Both Peterson and Graham probably understood the cause of Poe's moods. Graham's own statements to Sartain tend to confirm the fact that the office was at times pretty lively — for the source see note 600. Also see Woodberry, 1909, vol. I, page 330.

Force of circumstances and his own failings had produced the result, rather than any direct action on the part of Graham. Nevertheless, it was an accomplished fact. Griswold's assertion that Poe never contributed again to *Graham's* was untrue; Griswold himself must have seen the manuscript from Poe's pen that continued to come to the office even while the latter was editor. From time to time after leaving, Poe contributed altogether fifty items to *Graham's*. April, 1842, indeed, saw the important review of Longfellow's *Ballads and Other Poems*, and in May *The Masque of the Red Death*. A review of Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales* was continued in May from the April number, which was the last that Poe edited. In June, there was a review in *Graham's* from Poe's hand of Griswold's anthology, after which there was a hiatus through the summer, while he was away and ill, until September. Poe's own account of the parting with Graham is contained in a letter he wrote a few months later.[606]

> . . . My connection with *Graham's Magazine* ceased with the May number, which was completed by the first of April — since which period the conduct of the journal has rested with Mr. Griswold. . . . I have no quarrel with either Mr. Graham or Mr. Griswold — although I hold neither in especial respect. I have much aversion to communicate with them in any way, and perhaps it would be best that you should address them yourself. . . . I am making earnest although secret exertions to resume my project of the *Penn Magazine*, and I have every confidence that I shall succeed in issuing the first number on the first of January (1843). You may remember that it was my original design to issue it on the first of January 1842. I was induced to abandon the project at that period by the representations of Mr. Graham. He said that if I would join him as a salaried editor, giving up for the time my own scheme, he himself would unite with me at the expiration of six months, or certainly at the end of a year. As Mr. Graham was a man of capital and I had no money, I thought it most prudent to fall in with his views. The result has proved his want of faith and my own folly. In fact I was continually laboring against myself. Every overture made by myself for the benefit of *Graham*, by rendering that Magazine a greater source of profit, rendered its owner at the same time less willing to keep his word with me. At the time of our bargain (a verbal one), he had 6,000 subscribers — when I left him he had 40,000. It is no wonder that he has been tempted to leave me in the lurch. . . .

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[606] Poe to Daniel Bryan, Esq., of Alexandria (then D. C.), July 6, 1842.

As usual, most of the resentment was on the part of Poe. Neither Graham nor Griswold was even cool, and both continued to be most friendly, the latter at least in appearance, when occasion served. Even Peterson wrote to Lowell trying to reassure him in a vague way about Poe.[605] Peterson and Griswold did not get along, and Mr. Graham said he afterward discharged Griswold for writing a treacherous and secret attack on Peterson while they were both on *Graham's.*

The loss of the important position on the magazine he had done so much to build up was not taken so coolly by Poe as his letters seem to indicate. In the first place he was plunged into immediate poverty by the situation. There is some doubt as to just where he was living in Philadelphia at this time, as the Coates Street house seems to have been abandoned in the Spring of 1842. This is doubtful, though. There is, however, no doubt whatever about his physical condition. Desperate over the loss of his position and Virginia's health, he was now for the first time drinking heavily. The curtain, at this time, must again be raised for us by Mary Devereaux, Poe's former Baltimore sweetheart, who had married and was living in Jersey City.[422]

While Virginia was lying on what seemed her death-bed, probably at Coates Street in Philadelphia, Poe went on a spree and finally arrived in New York, where he looked up Mary's husband and obtained her address.[607] On the way over to Jersey City on the ferry boat he forgot it, and attracted much attention by wandering up and down, asking everybody whom he met for Mary's address. The ferry boat arrived in Jersey City and returned with Mr. Poe still aboard. Another trip was made, and the boat returned with Mr. Poe still aboard. Still another trip was made, and yet another, with what the passengers took to be a lunatic questioning them. Finally Poe found a deck hand who knew where the former Miss Devereaux resided. As the hatless man in the very black stock fixed him with eyes that did not focus, and insisted with mouth awry, that the address he would get if he " had to go to hell for it," the navvy, faced by the imperious Virginian, hastily complied. When Mary's husband later returned from work on the same boat, he was informed that a " crazy man had been looking for his wife." In the meantime Poe had found Mary.

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[607] On July 6, 1842, see note 606, Poe writes Daniel Bryan, " Upon my return from a brief visit to New York a day or two since . . ." etc. This may date the visit to Mary (*sic*). Or it may have been earlier just after losing his position at *Graham's*. The author of *Poe's Mary,* see note 422, dates the occurrence at that time, and says Poe found Griswold in charge when he returned. The exact date is doubtful but " Mary " says, " in the Spring of 1842."

> When Mr. Poe reached our house I was out with my sister, and he opened the door for us when we got back. We saw he was on one of his sprees, and he had been away from home for several days. He said to me: ' So you have married that cursed —— ! Do you love him truly? Did you marry him for love? ' I answered, ' That's nobody's business; that is between my husband and myself.' He then said, ' You don't love him. You do love me. You know you do.'

As to whose business this was, we do not learn. Mr. Poe, we are informed, stayed to tea, of which he drank only one cup. Even this, however, had an astonishing effect, for during the conversation at the table he became very much excited, and seizing a dish of radishes before him, took up a table knife and proceeded to reduce them to mincemeat with such enthusiasm that " the pieces flew over the table, to everybody's amusement." After " tea," Mr. Poe insisted upon music, and that Mary should sing him the old Baltimore song, his favorite, *Come Rest in this Bosom*. He then departed for parts unknown.

A few days later Mrs. Clemm, half frantic, having left Virginia in the care of the neighbors, appeared looking for " Eddie dear," whom she had evidently tracked from Philadelphia to Jersey City and Mary's house. Virginia, she said, was crazy with anxiety.

By this time, perhaps, no one was very much amused. A kindly posse of obliging citizens from Hoboken and its vicinity, together with " Muddie " and Mary, then set out in search, and the author of *The Imp of the Perverse* was finally found in the woods on the outskirts of Jersey City. Mosquitoes were then not unknown, even in that neighborhood, and the single cup of tea at Mary's is the last record of " food " some days before. " He was," she says, " wandering about like a crazy man. Mrs. Clemm took him back with her to Philadelphia." There would be an agony of penitence and several days in bed. Virginia would be coughing in one room and Eddie delirious in another — and there was no money. Only Mrs. Clemm knew how to weather this. It must often have been the basket again; there was no other way. But it was always mercifully and carefully hidden from the callers. Only those awful home-comings! The neighbors could not help but see them.

Not long after severing connection with *Graham's*, Poe and the family moved from Coates Street to a house much nearer the then publishing district of Philadelphia.[608] The new abode was a three-story, brick building in the rear of a typical Philadelphia residence, situated at 234 (now 530) North Seventh Street.[609] The house appears to have been built originally for servants' quarters, and stands in a rear lot, a short block from Spring Garden Street. The door opened on Brandywine Alley, then Wistar Lane, there being a private school between Poe's house and Spring Garden Street from 1842 to 1844.

No other house occupied by the poet during his manhood, with the possible exception of the Fordham Cottage in New York City, is so closely related with the intimate joys and tragedies of Poe's life as this brick cottage. It was under its roof that the last vestiges of his brief prosperity disappeared, and that the swift descent into the whirlpool of despair took on an accelerated motion.

This house, which is still standing (1926) in much the same condition in which Poe left it, connected with the front quarters of the landlord, who was, in 1842, a Mr. Albruger. It was of solid brick construction with a basement that, in Poe's day, contained a cistern. There were large paneled doors with wrought iron locks, and three rows of square-paned windows, those on the

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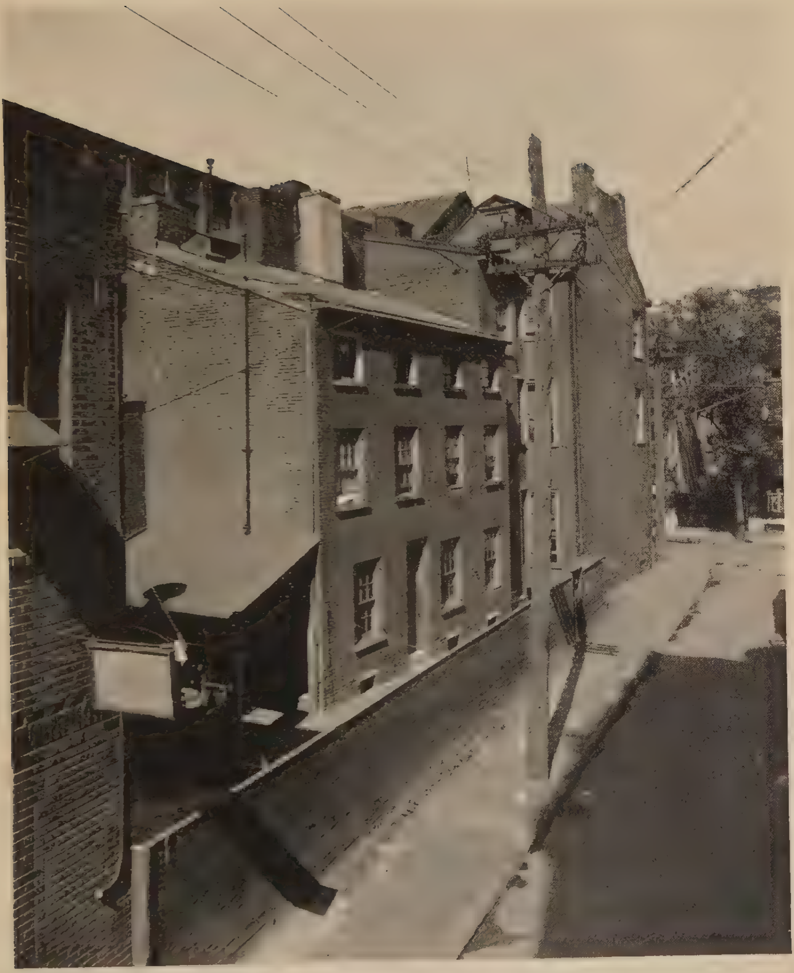
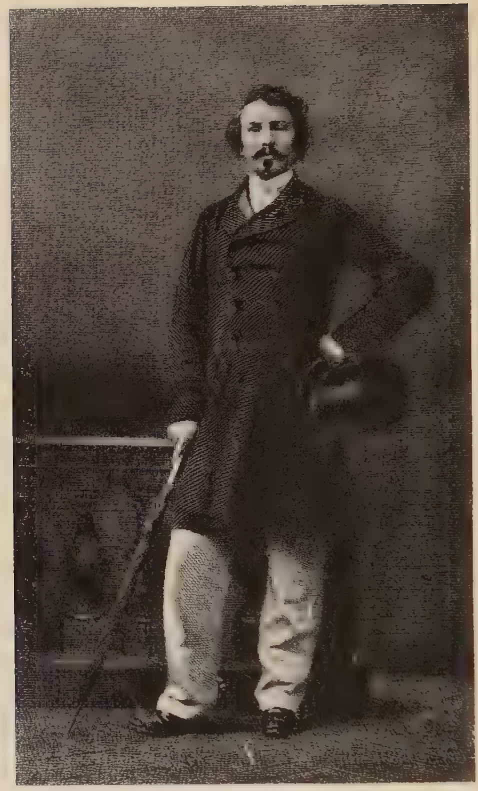
[608] This house, which is still standing on the present Brandywine Alley, in the rear of 530 North Seventh Street, Philadelphia, was visited by the author in April, 1926. The present tenant of the Poe quarters is a Mr. William Owens and his family. The place is little altered, but in poor repair. The pear tree was blown down in a storm some years since. Contemporary descriptions are taken from T. C. Clarke, Sartain, Griswold, Graham, Thomas, Mayne Reid, and others. Philadelphia is the only city where Poe lived which has neglected to honor some locality or residence connected with his name.

[609] Poe to Thomas, May 25, 1842: "I have moved from the old place, (*Coates Street*) — but should you pay an unexpected visit to Philadelphia, you will find my address at *Graham's*." This looks as if Poe were not yet certain of his new residence and was boarding for a while.



Poe's "Spring Garden Street House"

The rear of 530 N. Seventh Street, corner of Brandywine Alley
Philadelphia



Captain Mayne Reid

Author of *Afloat in the Forest*, *The Desert Home*, etc.

A friend of POE in Philadelphia who has left a description of domestic scenes in the Poe house

From a steel engraving

Courtesy of John T. Snyder, Esq., of Pelham, New York

third floor being casements. It contained a living-room on the first floor with an open fireplace and a rather handsome mantel. There was a small hall with narrow stairs, across which lay the kitchen, where " Muddie " spent most of her time, and two rooms on the second floor.

The front room, with a black slate mantel, was Poe's, the other being the guest chamber. Mrs. Clemm's and Virginia's apartments on the third floor were reached by narrow stairs. Mrs. Clemm had the rear room just across the hall from Virginia. " Sis," for the most part, lay ill in a small low-ceilinged bedroom containing three little casement windows almost like ships' ports, an open fireplace, and two large cupboards, more than ample for her scant wardrobe.

The house was, at first, fairly well furnished with items which gradually disappeared as Mrs. Clemm, during the next two years, was forced to pawn them piece by piece. Virginia's piano, now silent, was in the little downstairs living-room, with " a large hair-lined mahogany sofa." The white curtains, flowers, painted chairs, potted plants, framed engravings and woodcuts from magazines, and the caged birds, served to give the house an air of homelike comfort and charm which all who came there noticed. Poe's scant library, and a profusion of flowering plants blooming even in the winter time, helped to complete a background for the poet which none who partook of Mrs. Clemm's excellent repasts — served on snowy cloths in the sitting-room with a bright fire glinting on the simple china — failed to remark. No matter how extreme the poverty, " the small dwelling of a great poet " was always spotless. By the grace of " Muddie " and Virginia, it cast a charm.

Poe, too, contributed and helped. To him the place was his only refuge from a hostile universe, his dwelling in Arnheim, the land of dreams. Some years later he wrote a letter defending himself against accusations made by a small magazine called the *Weekly Universe*. Since it details his mode of private life, it is entitled to be constantly kept in mind: [610]

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[610] See Ingram in an undated letter by Poe. Text in Harrison, *Life and Letters* vol. II, page 285. Poe to Eveleth.

> The fact is this: — My *habits* are rigorously abstemious, and I omit nothing of the rational regimen requisite for health — *i.e.*, I rise early, eat moderately, drink nothing but water, and take abundant and regular exercise in the open air. *But this is my private life — my studious and literary life — and of course escapes the eye of the world.* The desire for society comes upon me only when I have become excited by drink. Then *only* I go — that is, at these times only I *have been* in the practice of going among my friends; who seldom, or in fact never, having seen me unless excited, take it for granted that I am always so. Those who *really* know me, know better. . . .

Poe, of course, like everyone else suffered from the fact that one's frailties and idiosyncrasies attract public attention and become the stuff of remark, gossip, and anecdote, while the long blameless hours of domestic innocence are too trite to stain any page, even a white one. And there is something pathetic and plaintive about this short paragraph of defense against a chorus of abuse, which, whatever its cause, was afterward coarse and unwarrantably profuse. It is the confession of a sensitive nervous spirit, so sensitive that it could only meet the real world when fortified by stimulants. Yet it is the expression of this very sensitivity in the poet for which the world values him.

The reminiscences of some of the neighbors who lived about the Spring Garden cottage in Philadelphia, where, for a time, the house of Usher was situated, — before it, too, like its dream prototype collapsed and crumbled, — recorded a variety of things.

The house, in the days when Poe lived there, was situated in a part of the city which still wore a semi-rural aspect. The dwelling was surrounded by a garden, and shaded by a giant pear tree. In the summer, there was a riot of bright flowers and tangled vines. " The little garden in summer and the house in winter were overflowing with choice flowers of the poet's selection." In the little parlor, Poe sat and wrote to Lowell and Dickens, or to his friend Thomas. Mrs. Clemm, in her widow's cap and gingham apron, sought the shade under the pear tree and peeled potatoes, or moved about the garden with her expert shears. Here *The Gold Bug* was written while Poe let his dreams wander back to the days of youth and the lonely, idle hours on Sullivan's Island near Fort Moultrie, recalling the very sound of the palmettoes as they grated in the sea breeze. In the Summer, there was a blaze of hollyhocks and geraniums, and a noise of bees, while the teachers and children next door remembered hearing the sound of a subdued girlish singing, and of having seen the pale face of Virginia at the upper casement. Poe had carried her harp upstairs.

Here Eliza White came again to call, Poe's old Richmond friend; her father, the good editor of the *Messenger*, was in ill health and dying. Mary Devereaux also visited " over from Jersey City." Sometime in 1842 Mrs. James Warner (Miss Herring), Poe's cousin and Baltimore sweetheart (now widowed), came to call with her parents. She had unexpectedly met Mrs. Clemm and Virginia on Chestnut Street one day. The Grahams, Petersons, Hirst, English with his whiskers " like antennae," Alexander the printer, Sartain, Dr. Mitchell, Captain Mayne Reid, F. W. Thomas, Mr. Thomas Clarke, Louis Godey, F. O. C. Darley, the artist, and many others came, too. The neighbors and their children, in love with Virginia, were much in and out. Even Rufus Griswold came to see, and was softened, almost to tenderness, in spite of himself. It was here, perhaps, that he heard that inspired conversation of which he was afterward moved to speak, even while damning the lips that could no longer reply.

> His conversation was at times almost supra-mortal in its eloquence. His voice was modulated with astonishing skill, and his large and variably expressive eyes looked repose or shot fiery tumult into theirs who listened, while his own face glowed or was changeless in pallor, as his imagination quickened his blood, or drew it back frozen to his heart. His imagery was from the worlds no mortal can see but with the vision of genius — Suddenly starting from a proposition exactly and sharply defined in terms of utmost simplicity and clearness, he rejected the forms of customary logic, and in a crystalline process of accretion, built up his ocular demonstrations in forms of gloomiest and ghostliest grandeur, or in those of the most airy and delicious beauty, so minutely, and so distinctly, yet so rapidly, that the attention which was yielded to him was chained till it stood among his wonderful creations —, till he himself dissolves the spell, and brought his hearers back to common and base existence, by vulgar fancies or by exhibitions of the ignoble passions. . . .[611]

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[611] From *The Ludwig Article* — Griswold's obituary notice of Poe.

But it was no Watteau pastoral that the Spring Garden house was to frame. It was poverty complete and devastating, with both Poe and Virginia ill, and the salary from *Graham's* cut off. Mrs. Clemm was soon forced to her old expedients, and they were now, sometimes, all in vain. We hear from Hirst of shad and waffles; but we also hear from Mrs. Catherine Bergin, of a Philadelphia charitable society, that Mrs. Clemm applied to her for aid in the Summer of 1842, when there was nothing in the house but bread and molasses, and not very much of that. Adding up everything that Poe received during 1842 for all that he wrote, what the family lived on is still a mystery. The piano disappeared, and various other articles, until, in a year or two, the house was almost bare and Mrs. Clemm had a handful of pawn tickets. Only a few chairs, and a beautiful red carpet that she clung to till the last, and the beds were left. It was fortunate, indeed, that marketing was cheap.

About midsummer, Virginia had another attack which drove Poe almost mad. It was his custom to slip out by the Wistar Street door and go down town, entering public houses as he passed, till Mrs. Clemm followed and brought him back. Philip Wagner, who kept a conveyancing office at the corner of Seventh and Spring Garden Streets, saw the sad tipsy return with the pleading, anxious woman; and the Baileys, good neighbors on Seventh Street, close by, also remembered.

Virginia, it appears, despite her invalidism, was often merry and loved to receive visitors. Among them was the little daughter of Thomas C. Clarke, who used to call frequently, and sit by her bedside. She afterward remembered singing a comic little tune, to which she had supplied some childish jargon, with a chorus about "The Wife of Mr. Poe." This delighted Virginia, who received it with "peal after peal of merry laughter."

It was a life of enormous, absurd, and grotesquely tragic contrasts. There would be an afternoon spent idly with Henry Hirst talking poetry; snatches of great conversation, while Poe warmed to some ethereal theme, and conjured cloud palaces and domes. Then followed a popping of Hirst's pistol at a mark set up in some country lane, or a mad shot at a badly scared farmer's chicken ("he once shot a chicken on the wing at fifty yards"),[601] then a walk back to town, and a pouring of drinks at Henry's "law office." Poe would return in an agony of remorse at the thought of the day wasted, of "Muddie" waiting stark with anxiety. The night would be spent with Virginia, trying to stop her terrible choking. He would walk the floor with her, the telltale red spots on his shirt bosom next morning driving him half insane. And yet — the *Stylus* was to come out January first!

From June to September there was scarcely a line from his pen. At times he was delirious that summer. Dr. Mitchell, a good Scotchman from Ayreshire, who had lived in Richmond, doubtless had many a talk with him about the High Street at Irvine, where Poe had played and gone to school as a little boy, and of the Allans and Galts and Fowlds — and what might have been. The Doctor took a remarkable interest in his patient, and may have interested the lady at Saratoga Springs to invite him there about midsummer. There was not enough money to take Virginia along, but Dr. Mitchell somehow secured cash, and letters of introduction for Poe. In August, he left.[612]

In the Summer of 1842, Poe was seen at Saratoga Springs, then the most fashionable watering place in America, driving in a handsome carriage with a married woman from Philadelphia, well enough known to have her name worth talking about.[612] Every day, for a week or so, he came with her in the morning and took the water.

Near the lady's house was a garden with big trees and trout ponds where a little boy played. And there is something more than a legend that the child gradually became fond of the gentleman in black with the flashing eyes and strange gestures, who walked in that garden and talked to himself, telling a story over and over again to no one visible, about a raven that talked and whose name was "Nevermore" — a word which the gentleman boomed out and waved his hands over. One day the boy remarked that he never heard of a bird with a name like that, at which the gentleman appeared much delighted and wrote something down. Later on other people read about it:

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[612] Poe, in his reply to Thomas Dunn English.

[613] See Mrs. Susan Archer Weiss, *Home Life of Poe*, pages 103–104; for an account of the Saratoga incident, pages 105–107. See Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, pages 112–113, for further remarks on the Saratoga incident. The source for the Saratoga story is mainly Dr. W. E. Griffis in the *Home Journal* for November 5, 1884.

> For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
> Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door —
> Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door
> With such name as 'Nevermore.' —

And it was perfectly true; no one ever had. At any rate, in the Summer of 1842 or 1843, while at the Barhyte Trout Ponds, at Saratoga Springs, Poe showed a draft of *The Raven* to a correspondent of the *New York Mirror.*

Unfortunately, some Philadelphians, summering at the Springs, noticed that Mr. Poe, the distinguished-looking editor of *Graham's Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine,* was there without his wife and driving out with a married woman! A great deal of foul talk, that later on played its part in driving that editor out of the Quaker City, got under way.

Poe returned to Philadelphia, where Virginia had been having hemorrhages about that time, and almost succumbed to an attack of heart failure himself, the third since 1834–35. This, as usual, seems to have brought him up with a round turn, and he seems again to have given up alcohol for a time. The trip to Saratoga, on Dr. Mitchell's advice and advances, was probably a step in the right direction. Poe was in a condition now where he could not do without stimulants.

Mrs. Warner, his cousin, was now much at the house. She was considerably concerned over the state of affairs, and sat often by Virginia's bedside. To the invalid she brought small gifts from time to time — wine glasses and a little perfume bottle — greatly cherished by the girl-wife who looked "only fourteen years of age." Mrs. Warner (Miss Herring) contributed an important piece of evidence. She says that about this time *she had often seen him* (*Poe*) *decline to take even one glass of wine but . . . that for the most part, his periods of excess were occasioned by a free use of opium. . . . During these attacks he was kept* *entirely quiet, and they did all possible to conceal his faults and failures.*"[614]

During the entire year 1842, a more or less faithful correspondence went on between Poe and his friend, F. W. Thomas, in Washington, with a notable hiatus during the months of July and August. From these letters, a rather intimate insight into Poe's doings may be gleaned. The chief affairs discussed were literary, personal, and the plan to secure for Poe the benefits of government employ.

The lever chosen to move the stone of political indifference was Robert Tyler, a son of the President, to whom Poe was known by reputation. The entering wedge was made by Poe's first expressing a favorable opinion of one of Robert Tyler's poems. Thomas brought this to young Tyler's notice on a visit to the White House, and then wrote to Poe:

> . . . Robert Tyler expressed himself highly gratified with your favorable opinion of his poems which I mentioned to him. He observed that he valued your opinion more than any other critic's in the country, — to which I subscribed. I am satisfied that any aid he could extend to you would be extended with pleasure. Write me frankly upon the subject. . . .[615]

The plan at first was to interest Robert Tyler in the scheme for the new magazine, the *Stylus,* about which Thomas was enthusiastic. It was hoped that Tyler would invest, or use his influence to throw some government printing in the way of the new magazine, but this plan was soon abandoned as impracticable, and Poe, after calling on Judge Blythe in Philadelphia, who evidently had the local federal patronage in hand, wrote to Robert Tyler[616] saying he thought with his continued influence that an appointment at the Philadelphia Custom House might be secured.

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[614] Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, *Poe and Opium,* page 428, prints a letter from Miss Poe to him (August 28, 1884) in which Miss Herring is quoted.

[615] Thomas to Poe, Washington, February 6, 1842.

[616] Poe to Robert Tyler — letter in the University of Wisconsin collection. Young Robert Tyler and his actress wife, the mistress of the White House, gathered about them such wits, *literati,* and material for a salon as the muddy capital city then afforded. Virginians and Southerners were especially welcome, which accounts for Thomas being so often at the White House, and for Robert Tyler's interest in Poe being so cordial.

Tyler replied (March 31, 1842) giving the required recommendation. The matter, as usual in such cases, dragged on. On May 21, 1842, we find Thomas again writing to Poe, after another visit to see young Tyler at the White House.

> . . . Last night I was speaking of you, and took occasion to suggest that a situation in the Custom House, Philadelphia, might be acceptable to you, as Lamb (Charles) had held a somewhat similar appointment, etc., etc., and as it would leave you leisure to pursue your literary pursuits. Robert replied that he felt confident that such a situation could be obtained for you in the course of two or three months at farthest, as certain vacancies would then occur. What say you to such a plan? Official life is not laborious — and a situation that would suit you and place you beyond the necessity of employing your pen, he says he can obtain for you there. . . .

The essential reason for Poe's desire to secure government patronage comes out in his reply to Thomas four days later:

> . . . Nothing would more precisely meet my views. Could I obtain such an appointment, I would be enabled thoroughly to carry out all my ambitious projects. It would relieve me of all care as regards a mere subsistence, and thus allow me time for thought, which, in fact, is action.

What Mr. Poe thought of the relative value of being apprenticed to such men as Burton and Graham, and of the necessity of leisure for literature stands out plainly here.

Poe was now again pressing the *Stylus* project earnestly. In July, he writes to Thomas about it:

> I feel that now is the time to strike. The delay after all, will do me no injury. My conduct of *Graham's* has rendered me better and I hope more favorably known than before. I am anxious, above all things, to render the journal one in which the *true*, in contradistinction from the merely factitious, genius of the country shall be represented. I shall yield nothing to great names — nor to the circumstances of position. I shall make war to the knife against the New England assumption of 'all the decency and all the talent.'

In letters written to Thomas Holley Chivers on June 6, Poe had proposed that the latter finance the new magazine, a proposal which Chivers did not accept, although he promised to help with lists. Nothing daunted by this, however, Poe again announced in August, to one of his Georgia Poe relatives, that the first issue would certainly come out the first of the new year. Prudently regarding the Custom House appointment as merely a basis of living upon which to carry out the magazine scheme, Poe had been exerting himself in Philadelphia, probably immediately after his return from Saratoga, definitely to secure the place. In angling for a position he was, of course, confronted by the local condition of affairs in the contemporary political carp pond. It was very muddy.

The Whigs had elected their candidate, Harrison, largely on an anti-Jackson policy of treasury reform. Harrison's death, a month after his inauguration, brought in Tyler, the first Vice-President to succeed to the Presidency. Tyler refused to carry out the fiscal policies of his party, with the result that he split the Whigs and attempted to build up a party of his own, composed of both Whigs and Democrats, but based almost wholly on a ruthless use of the veto and a merciless chopping off of heads in federal patronage. Tyler was especially unpopular in Philadelphia, and the " T-party " there was composed of the most blatant type of politicians in a city famous for bad politics. It was with such an Ali Baba company that Israfel was now trying to ingratiate himself. One Smith was Collector of the Port, by virtue of his vices.

Towards the end of August, just after his breakdown, and while still nervous and depressed, Poe began to pay his political calls after a reassuring message, through a friend, from " Rob " Tyler. " I have, also, paid my respects to General J. W. Tyson, the leader of the T. party in the city, who seems especially well disposed, — but, notwithstanding *all this*, I have my doubts. A few days will end them . . ." he writes Thomas. " My poor wife still continues ill, I have scarcely a faint hope of her recovery. . . ." [617] It was a most trying time, and Poe seems again to have resorted to his usual palliatives for sorrow.

Towards the end of September, 1842, F. W. Thomas paid a visit to the Poes at Spring Garden Street, while on a political and literary business trip to Philadelphia. His account of the house and its inmates at that time is straightforward and significant:

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[617] Poe to Thomas, August 27, 1842.

> Poe was living in a little home on the rural outskirts of the city in a house that is described by Thomas as small but quite comfortable within. Although the whole aspect of the cottage testified to the poverty of its tenants, the rooms impressed the visitor as being neat and orderly. Thomas arrived quite late in the morning but found Mrs. Clemm busy cooking Poe's breakfast. The caller produced quite an evident confusion by his sudden advent, and there was some difficulty in arranging to include him at the board. In the meanwhile, Virginia entertained the guest. Thomas found the poet's wife to be both graceful and agreeable, and he remarked not only her regular and well-formed features but the most expressive pair of eyes that had ever gazed upon him. Nevertheless, her excessive pallor, a consumptive cough, and the deep facial lines caused him to look upon her as a victim to be claimed by an early grave. Both Virginia and Mrs. Clemm were much concerned about their "Eddie," and made it quite plain to Thomas that they hoped most ardently that the head of the house might soon be able to secure some steady work.
>
> Poe, who had evidently just arisen, now appeared to greet his friend. A mop of dark hair tangled carelessly over his high forhead, and contrary to his general habit, his clothes were rather slovenly. Poe's greeting to Thomas was cordial, although a little restrained, and Thomas noted that his friend complained of feeling unwell. Poe told him that he had gone to New York to find employment, and also remarked that an effort to publish a new edition of his tales had been unsuccessful. Like so many others who visited the Poes, Thomas was forever impressed by Poe's pathetic tenderness and loving manner toward Virginia, but the visitor from Washington could not help but observe at the same time, and with the deepest regret, that his friend had again been yielding to intemperate habits. Thomas was so worried as to venture to remonstrate with Poe who admitted that he had lately been drinking " while in New York " — and then changed the subject by relating a humorous dialogue of Lucian.
>
> Later on during the same day, the two friends visited town together. Thomas says that Poe was sober when they parted and they were to meet by appointment next day.[618]

Poe had promised to be present to hear Thomas make a political speech on Saturday night at Independence Hall, and to say good-by to him before his departure. A few days later, September 21, 1842, Poe writes:

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[618] J. H. Whitty, *Memoir*, large edition of *Complete Poems*, pages xliii and xliv, prints Thomas' text.

> . . . The will to be with you was not wanting — but, upon reaching home on Saturday night, I was taken with a severe chill and fever — the latter keeping me company all next day. I found myself too ill to venture out, but nevertheless, would have done so had I been able to obtain the consent of all parties. As it was I was quite in a quandary, for we keep no servant and no messenger could be procured in the neighborhood. I contented myself with the reflection that you would not think it necessary to wait for me very long after nine o'clock, and *that you were not quite so implacable in your resentments as myself.* I was much in hope that you would make your way out of the afternoon. Virginia and Mrs. were much grieved at not being able to bid you farewell. . . .

For a rare glimpse, Poe opens the door of his own home in this. Thomas was by no means " implacable " and again interested himself in his friend's behalf in Washington. Why Mr. Poe had chills and fever Saturday night, and why his wife and mother-in-law would not let him go out, Thomas knew only too well.

A few days later, Mr. Smith thrust a rude thumb into the bubble of political preferment. On November 19 — the time for announcing the customs house appointments had come and passed — Poe writes to Thomas:

> . . . Some of the papers announced four removals and appointments. Among the latter I observed the name of —— Pogue. Upon inquiry among those behind the curtain, I soon found that no such person as —— Pogue had any expectation of an appointment, and that the name was a misprint or rather a misunderstanding of the reporters, who had heard *my own* name spoken of at the Customs House.[619]

Poe waited for two days before calling on the genial Mr. Smith, who had promised " that he would send for me when he wished to swear me in." He had already called thrice before. Mr. Smith had promised to swear him in in four days. When Mr. Poe called to hold up his hand Mr. Smith was out. Mr. Smith and Mr. Poe seem to have engaged in a game of hide-and-go-seek in which

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[619] Poe to Thomas, November 19, 1842.

Mr. Poe was " it." Mr. Poe again called and was informed that a messenger would be sent for him when Mr. Smith was ready, but the latter neglected to take the former's address. Mr. Poe then waited a month and called again, but he was not asked to take a seat —— " I will *send* for you, Mr. Poe " — and that was all. Yet once more the unsent-for Mr. Poe reappeared, when the following colloquy took place:

> 'Have you no good news for me?'
> 'No, I am instructed to make no more removals.'
> 'But I have heard from a friend, from Mr. Robert Tyler, that you were requested to appoint me.'
> 'From *whom* (*sic*) did you say?'
> 'From Mr. *Robert* Tyler.'
> (I wish you could have seen the scoundrel, — for scoundrel, my dear Thomas, in your private ear, *he is* —)
> 'From Mr. Robert Tyler!' says he — 'Hem! I have received orders from *President* Tyler to make no more appointments, and shall make none.'[619]

Before Mr. Poe left, Smith, however, vouchsafed one other remark. He *had,* it seems, made just *one* more appointment. It was that of another man to the place that had been promised to Poe, who now returned to Spring Garden Street to write a furious letter to Thomas.

> You can have no idea of the low ruffians and boobies — men, too, without a shadow of political influence or *caste* — who have received office over my head. If Mr. Smith had the feelings of a gentleman, he would have perceived that from the very character of my claim, — by which I mean *want* of claim — he should have made my appointment an early one. . . . I would write more, my dear Thomas, but my heart is too heavy. You have felt the misery of hope deferred, and will feel for me. . . .

Thus ended the first of the only two instances in which the United States customs service has been sought out to provide oats for Pegasus. The second befell in the " reign " of Theodore Roosevelt, who had such a taking way, even with customs officers, that the United States Government for a brief while was surprised into cherishing literature. Mr. Tyler and his " T party " proved less sustaining to Mr. Poe.

The Fall of the year 1842 is also notable, in the annals of Poe, for the commencement of an intimate correspondence with James Russell Lowell. Poe admired Lowell's work, and had said so in print on several occasions. Towards the end of 1842, Lowell was busily engaged in arranging for the début of his new magazine, the *Pioneer*, that was to begin to appear monthly with January, 1843. Poe now wrote to him from Philadelphia, — "I should be glad to furnish a short article each month of such a character and upon such terms as you could afford in the beginning." Lowell replied immediately that he had already intended to ask Poe to contribute to the *Pioneer* because ". . . it assures me of the friendship of almost the only *fearless* American critic. . . . Had you not written you would soon have heard from me. I give you *carte blanche* for prose or verse as may best please you — with one exception. . . ."[620]

This "exception" was to the spirit an article, entitled *Rufus Dawes: A Retrospective Criticism,* which had appeared in *Graham's* the month before. The "retrospect" was Poe's own remembrance of Dawes' paper's treatment of *Al Aaraaf* when it appeared in Baltimore in 1829.[354] The bitter taste had remained in Poe's mouth for almost fourteen years, and, in the columns of *Graham's,* in October, 1842, he spit it back venomously. Lowell did not like this rancorous vein in Poe, one from which he himself suffered at Poe's hands later, and, at the beginning, he took good care to give Poe notice that the pages of the *Pioneer* would not be open for the prosecution of any literary vendettas — "I do not wish an article like that of yours on Dawes, who, although I think with you that he is a bad *poet,* has yet I doubt not tender feelings as a *man* which I should be chary of wounding."[620] This was a point of view which nature had made it impossible for Poe to understand. He was the first to complain of the lack of it in others, and the last to recognize its absence in himself.

The inadvertent revelation of self in the letters of these two men is highly intriguing. Although no matters of very great moment were discussed between them, little tell-tale phrases and typical attitudes towards life leap out, from time to time, reveal-ing the soul that directed the pen. Although these letters bear the postmarks of Philadelphia and Boston respectively, in reality they passed each other bound for the antipodes. Poe lived at the north pole of egotism, and Lowell in the more genial lands of an altruistic hemisphere. To Poe the inhabitants of that place "did walk upon their hands." He could not, for the life of him, get a correct view of their actual mode of locomotion. The icebergs that surrounded the north pole of egotism compelled Poe to rule, as the lonely and mysterious wizard, over the frozen deserts of his own nature. It was a strange land of almost perpetual night, lit fearfully by the sardonic face of a tottering moon, and wheeling zodiacal signs that marked the lairs of lions and the houses of dragons. On the borders of this country, which marched afar off with the faintly rumored kingdoms of humanity, the griffins of imagination trafficked with the sons of men for gold. The full summer sun never rose there, and it was haunted only by the wailing ghosts of dead women. Nothing disturbed it, and the wizard who ruled there, except the recurrence of terrific earthquakes. Then the ice would be melted by the hot volcanic springs that burst up from beneath,

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[620] Poe to Lowell, November 16, 1842, and Lowell to Poe, November 19, 1842.

> As the scoriac rivers that roll . . .
> That groan as they roll down, Mount Yaanek
> In the realms of the boreal pole.

Diplomatic relations with the king of this realm were always difficult, and there were few postmen who continued to deliver letters there for any considerable time. For some time Mr. Lowell's persisted. It was the news from this strange realm of Poe's which Lowell most desired from him — "for good stories (imaginative ones) and if you are inspired to mystery of that kind I shall be glad to get it."[620] Poe was to receive $13 for every article. Sometime in December, 1842, he arranged to place the manuscript of his story *The Tell-Tale Heart* in Lowell's hands for the first number of the *Pioneer*. The flourish of trumpets in the correspondence about this is typical:

LOWELL

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I ought to have written to you before, but I have had so much to distract me, and so much to make me sick of pen and ink I *could not*. Your story of *The Tell-Tale Heart* will appear in my first number. Mr. Tuckerman (perhaps your chapter on Autographs is to blame) would not print it in the 'Miscellany,' and I was glad to get it for myself. It may argue presumptuousness in me to dissent from his verdict. . . .[621]

On Christmas Day, 1842, Poe mailed his answer to Lowell:

> My Dear Friend, — I send you a brief poem for No. 2, with my best wishes. I . . . thank you for reversing the judgment of Mr. Tuckerman, — the author of the *Spirit of Poesy* which, by the way, is somewhat of a misnomer — since no spirit appears. . . . Should he, at any time, accept an effusion of mine I should ask myself what twattle I had been perpetrating, so flat as to come within the scope of his approbation. He writes . . . 'If Mr. Poe would condescend to furnish more quiet articles. . . .' All I have to say is that if Mr. T. persists in his *quietude*, he will put a *quietus* on the Magazine. . . .

After which, no doubt, Mr. Poe enjoyed his Christmas dinner, if there was one, all the more. Lowell's *Pioneer* came out with *The Tell-Tale Heart* the first of the new year, but there was no sign of the *Stylus*. Nevertheless, it was the main issue now being considered by Poe. So sure of its success was he that he had refused an offer of Mr. Graham to return to his old position at a better salary and with more influence.[622] Mr. Griswold was proving satisfactory only to himself. The bells of Philadelphia rang merrily for New Year's, 1843.

1843

The early Winter and Spring of 1843 were largely given up to the schemes for publishing the *Stylus*, which was the new name chosen for the old *Penn*, due to the fact that under a new title the promotion of the same project had a fresh disguise. This plan to start a magazine of his own was a central fact in Poe's literary history. He never gave it up, and even at the time of his death, six years later, the *Stylus* was still being actively projected.[623]

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[621] Lowell to Poe, December 17, 1842.

[622] Poe to Thomas, September 12, 1842. Graham had made Poe an offer to return at advantageous terms on account of dissatisfaction with Griswold.

[623] See Poe to E. H. N. Patterson as late as August 7, 1849, only two months before Poe's death. On October 1, 1849, Poe told Mrs. Weiss (Susan Archer Tally) that he was preparing a critique of her poems for the *Stylus* — for January, 1850. See *Last Days of Edgar Poe*, *Scribner's Monthly*, March, 1878, Mrs. Weiss.

In 1843, he came nearer than at any other time to seeing himself actually ensconced in his own sanctum. The cause of his failure must soon be recounted. It constituted, perhaps, the literary, if not the moral crisis of his life, as all his hopes, ambitions and prospects were bound up with it. Poe felt that the delay with the *Penn,* and the experience he had gained on *Graham's,* were in reality to his advantage. He so wrote Thomas, who encouraged him, and there is no doubt his greatly enhanced reputation as editor of *Graham's* was all in his favor.

In the meantime he strove to support himself by doing hack work of any kind, and selling stories here and there. Some of these were taken by Lowell. *Graham's* still continued to carry his work. During the year, two reviews of some importance appeared there from his hand. Another periodical, however, at this period was more used by him. This was the *Philadelphia Saturday Museum.*

The exact nature of Poe's connection with the *Saturday Museum,* an obscure sheet of which no complete file is known, is very indefinite. He was in some way closely associated with it, and the paper announced, early in 1843, that he was to become its assistant editor. It is likely that Poe allowed the owners to think that he might do this, and so kept them in good fettle while he used the sheet for his own purposes. It had for a time a considerable circulation and was a good medium for advertising himself and pushing the *Stylus.* That he never intended to connect himself with it permanently, is shown by his own statement in a letter to Lowell in March, 1843, in which he says the announcement had been made "prematurely." Hirst also wrote for the *Museum,* and Poe also took advantage of that for his own advancement.

During January and February, Poe spent much of his time at Hirst's office and at the house of Thomas C. Clarke at 206 South Twelfth Street, Philadelphia, where the prospects for the new magazine were earnestly discussed. Mr. Clarke was a publisher, an editor, and a gentleman of some means, and was finally persuaded by Poe and Hirst, now bosom friends, and by the favorable letters and encomiums from Thomas in Washington, to back

Poe financially. Thomas, as a writer and a politician, had much influence with Clarke, who depended upon Poe's Washington friend to obtain the subscriptions and endorsements, of prominent men in the Capital City. In some way or other, the scheme to get Poe a government position, which had not been entirely abandoned, was bound up with the magazine. By the end of January the matter had been arranged, and Poe, Hirst, F. O. C. Darley, an artist, and W. D. Riebsam, a friend of Hirst's, all met with Thomas Clarke, when an agreement with Darley was signed by Clarke and Poe, for the artist to furnish illustrations to the new magazine. Hirst and Riebsam signed as witnesses.[624]

The agreement carried out Poe's ideas as to the nature of magazine illustration which he had earlier enunciated in the *Penn* prospectus. Darley was one of the best illustrators in Philadelphia, and has left sketches which have successfully captured the peculiar aspect of the times. The signing of an agreement with a well-known artist who bound himself not to work for other magazines for the ensuing year, shows that the financial arrangements for the *Stylus* were completed, and that the final success of the scheme now rested with Poe. It was his great opportunity; one which he lost.

The next move was to advertise Poe himself as a literary figure, and to announce the new magazine widely. To do this, the columns of the *Saturday Museum* were employed.

Poe wrote in February to Thomas asking him to do a sketch of his life for the *Museum*. Congress was in session and Thomas, on account of a press of work, had to refuse.[625] The material, notes, and clipped items of praise for Poe's work, were then turned over to Hirst, who wrote the sketch, which was accompanied by a portrait, a poor one, and was published in the *Museum* about the end of February, 1843. Through influence or good will, other papers noticed it.

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[624] Agreement between Felix O. C. Darley and Thomas C. Clarke with Edgar A. Poe signed January 31, 1843. Witnesses, present, Henry B. Hirst, W. D. Riebsam. For text see Harrison, *Life and Letters of Edgar Allan Poe*, vol. II, pages 126–127.

[625] F. W. Thomas said: That Poe sent him the notes for the *Museum* biography, but he had evaded writing them. Thomas told Poe afterwards that he knew more of Poe's history than had been sent him. Poe was amused and laughed the matter off by admitting that the story was intended to help the magazine project. . . . All of which throws a side-light on Poe's statements about his own life. See also Thomas's letter to Poe, Washington, February 1, 1843.

The *Spirit of the Times* (Philadelphia) remarked:

> The *Saturday Museum* of this week contains a very fine likeness of our friend Edgar Allan Poe, Esq., with a full account of his truly eventful life. We look upon Mr. Poe as one of the most powerful, chaste, and erudite writers of the day, and it gives us pleasure to see him placed through the public press in his proper position before the world.

The *Saturday Museum* then took up the cry and replied:

> We are glad to hear so good a paper as the *Times* speak thus highly of Mr. Poe, not only from the justice which it renders that powerful writer, but because we have been so fortunate as to secure his services as associate editor of the *Saturday Museum,* where we intend it (*i.e.,* his fame) shall be placed beyond the reach of conjecture. So great was the interest excited by the biography and poems of Mr. Poe published in the *Museum* of last week, that to supply those who were disappointed in obtaining copies we shall be at the expense of an extra edition, which will be printed with corrections and additions. Of this extra we shall publish an edition on fine white paper. It will be ready for delivery at the office Saturday morning.

In Hirst's " biography," Poe included some of his cryptograms and elaborated on his skill in solving them. Other papers copied this, as far off as Baltimore. It was a good lay, and throws an amusing light on the current methods of puffing. A little later the prospectus of the *Stylus,* practically a repetition of Poe's doctrines of magazine publishing given in the prospectus of the *Penn* a year before, was published in the *Museum.* Thomas showed a copy of the biography to Robert Tyler and other Washington friends, who were impressed.[626] Poe's articles on cypher, and his stories had created a considerable stir in Washington, and, through the efforts of Thomas and others, arrangements were now made for him to go on and deliver a lecture there, be received at the White House, and secure the endorsements and subscriptions of prominent men and government clerks. It was his great chance to make the darling project of his literary ambition a fact. Mr. Clarke advanced the necessary cash, and, on March 8, 1843, with a little money in his pocket and hopes never higher, Poe took the train for Washington at the old Eleventh and Market Street Station, and set out. He was, of course, as always on important occasions, laboring under great nervous excitement and a sublime egotistic confidence.

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[626] " Yes, I saw the *Saturday Museum* in Mr. Robert Tyler's room, and happened to light upon the article in which we are mentioned. I read that portion of it to him and shall take care that he is not misinformed on the subject. I remember Mr. Hirst." Thomas to Poe, Washington, February 1, 1843.

Thomas, who was a bachelor, had his rooms at *Fuller's Hotel.* Luck, as usual, was against Poe, and upon his arrival at the hostelry to which he had been bidden by his friend, he found Thomas ill. It was an unimportant fact apparently, but it was another crux in Poe's literary career. Had his good friend been well he might have protected Poe against himself. The fact was, he was not able to go about with him, and turned him over to a mutual friend, J. E. Dow, who was known to his friends, not without good cause, as " Rowdy Dow."

Mr. Fuller, the proprietor of the hostelry, was a famous host, and, on the evening of Poe's arrival, there was a party in which the *Fuller House* port wine played an important part. Dow says Poe was " over-persuaded " to take some port wine. Mr. Fuller was a host who would not be denied. The next day Poe was ill and had evidently spent all his money, for he had a shave and hair cut in preparation for the presidential interview at the barber shop just above *Fuller's*. He could not pay the " levy " fee and had to let it go on credit. The next day (March 11) he was better, and went through all of the government departments getting subscriptions. On account of his condition, however, Dow, who accompanied him, would not take him to the White House. On returning to the *Hotel Fuller,* Poe, being out of cash, wrote the following letter to his financial backer, Mr. Clarke:

Washington, *March* 11, 1843

MY DEAR SIR, — I write merely to inform you of my well doing, for, so far, I have done nothing.

My friend, Thomas, upon whom I depended, is sick. I suppose he will be well in a few days. In the meantime I shall have to do the best I can.

I have not seen the President yet.

My expenses were more than I thought they would be, although I have economized in every respect, and this delay (Thomas being sick) puts me out sadly. *However,* all is going right. I have got the subscriptions of *all* the departments, President, etc. I believe that I am making a *sensation* which will tend to the benefit of the magazine.

Day after to-morrow I am to lecture. Rob Tyler is to give me an article, also Upsher. Send me $10 by mail as soon as you get this. I am grieved to ask you for money in this way, but you will find your account in it twice over.

Very truly yours,
EDGAR A. POE

Thos. C. Clarke, *Esq.*

Mr. Poe was certainly making a *sensation,* but not one calculated to benefit the magazine. Upon calling at the White House later with Dow, he had been in such a state as to make his condition evident to Robert Tyler, and it was thought best that he should not see the President. Mr. Poe, as usual, wore a Spanish-looking cloak and it was his *peccadillo* while in Washington to insist upon wearing it wrongside out, an eccentricity that certainly did cause somewhat of a sensation, evidently not a comfortable one to Dow, who upon the evening of the fourth day also felt called upon to address Mr. Clarke.

Washington, *March* 12, 1843

DEAR SIR, — I deem it to be my bounden duty to write you this hurried letter in relation to our mutual friend E. A. P.

He arrived here a few days since. On the first evening he seemed somewhat excited, having been over-persuaded to take some port wine.

On the second day he kept pretty steady, but since then he has been, at intervals, quite unreliable.

He exposes himself here to those who may injure him very much with the President, and thus prevent us from doing for him what we wish to do if he is himself again in Philadelphia. He does not understand the ways of politicians nor the manner of dealing with them to advantage. How should he?

Mr. Thomas is not well and cannot go home with Mr. P. My business and the health of my family will prevent me from so doing.

Under all circumstances of the case, I think it advisable for you to come on and see him safely back to his home. Mrs. Poe is in a bad state of health, and I charge you, as you have a soul to be saved, to say not one word to her about him until he arrives with you. I shall expect you or an answer to this letter by return mail.

Should you not come, we will see him on board the cars bound for Philadelphia, but we fear he might be detained in Baltimore and not be out of harm's way.

I do this under a solemn responsibility. Mr. Poe has the highest order of intellect, and I cannot bear that he should be the sport of senseless creatures, who, like oysters, keep sober, and gape and swallow everything.[627]

I think your good judgment will tell you what course you ought to pursue in the matter, and I cannot think it will be necessary to let him know that I have written you this letter; but I cannot suffer him to injure himself here without giving you this warning.

Yours respectfully,
J. E. Dow

To Thos. C. Clarke, *Esq.*
Philadelphia, Pa.

This is evidently the letter of a kindly and thoughtful, but very worried gentleman. It is one of the most forbearing and yet wisest letters that was ever written about Poe. That Dow should have thought it necessary to inform Clarke, from whom it was important to keep such facts under ordinary circumstances, tells the story. His remark about Baltimore is almost prophetic. Poe was to have delivered a lecture in Washington on the thirteenth, but that had to be given up. He borrowed money from both Thomas and Dow and succeeded in making a spectacle of himself.

On New York Avenue near Thirteenth and H Streets, Poe, Dow, one Dr. Lacey, Brady, who afterwards distinguished himself taking photographs of Civil War scenes, and a man who was apparently a Spaniard (*sic*), held a roaring party in which mint juleps played the star rôle. Poe whose risibilities were always stirred by mustachios, made considerable fun of those adorning the countenance of the "Don," and trouble ensued. Mr. Poe was taken back to *Fuller's*.[628] No sign of Mr. Clarke's appearing, and apparently no word from him, induced Thomas and Dow to persuade Poe to return immediately. His appearance in Washington in clothes turned wrongside out, and in an excited state, talking, gesticulating and rowing with bearded gentlemen, after being puffed as the "most powerful, chaste, and erudite writer of the day," was a fatal outcome. Dow took Poe home, where, it appears, he caused considerable chagrin to his friend, whose wife was ill.

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[627] The italics have been supplied here. This is one of the most significant remarks ever made about Edgar Allan Poe.

[628] According to Thomas's account and Poe's own letter to Thomas and Dow after arriving home, "the party" was continued at *Fuller's.* Doctor Fraily, for whom Poe had solved a cryptogram some time before, was present at the hotel, and came in for some abuse from Poe. Poe must have been hurried off home without further delay that night, as he breakfasted at Baltimore next morning.

It had been the hope of Thomas to present Poe at the White House to the President, and secure the official promise of the first reversion of the Custom House job at Philadelphia. Smith, the Collector there, had been appointed *ad interim* by Tyler and was having difficulty in being approved by Tyler's recalcitrant Congress. Hence Dow's worry over Mr. Poe's appearance on being presented to political friends. Washington, indeed, was the last place Poe should have appeared in. The convivial way of politicians, and hotel life at the Capital, was an impossible gantlet for him to run. It had been a fatal adventure. The "oysters who stayed sober but gaped and swallowed everything" could not believe that in the funny, maudlin gentleman to whom they were introduced, they beheld the greatest literary figure of their age. The lecture had been cancelled. Mr. Robert Tyler, it appears, was shocked, and Poe's worst weaknesses exhibited in the White House parlor itself. It was all a huge fiasco. Worst of all, Mr. Clarke knew why. Dow, it seems, had to tell Poe that he had written Clarke, probably in order to prevail upon him to return.

Poe departed on the night of the thirteenth, the date of his lecture, evidently in such a condition that it was necessary to notify Mrs. Clemm to meet him. On the way home he began to realize the necessity of smoothing matters over with Mr. Clarke, for he got a shave and good breakfast in Baltimore and returned by the Susquehanna Railroad, lunching on the way. Mrs. Clemm was waiting for him "at the car office," in what state of mind can be imagined. Poe's appearance, he himself describes "as quite decent." Nevertheless, he went home for supper, did his best to soothe Virginia, and took a warm bath. He then called to make his peace with Mr. Clarke. The rest can best be told in his letter from Spring Garden Street the next day (March 16, 1843) to —

My dear Thomas and Dow, —

I never saw a man in my life more surprised to see another. He (Clarke) thought by Dow's epistle that I must not only be dead but buried, and would as soon have thought of seeing his great-great-great-grandmother. He received me, therefore, very cordially, and made light of the matter. I told him what had been agreed upon — that I was a little sick, and that Dow, knowing I had been, in times past, given to spreeing upon an extensive scale, had become unduly alarmed, etc., etc., that when I found he had written, I thought it best to come home. He said my trip had improved me, and that he had never *seen me looking so well!* — and I don't believe I ever did. This morning I took medicine, and, as it is a snowy day will avail myself of the excuse to stay at home — so that by to-morrow I shall be *really* as well as ever. Virginia's health is about the same; but her distress of mind has been even more than I anticipated. She desires her *kindest* remembrances to both of you — as also does Mrs. C.

Clarke, it appears, wrote to Dow, who must have received the letter this morning. Please reenclose the letter to me, here, so that I may know how to guide myself. And, Thomas, do write immediately as proposed. If *possible,* enclose a line from Rob Tyler — but I fear under the circumstances, it is not so. I blame no one but myself.

The letter which I looked for, and which I wished returned, is not on its way — reason no money forthcoming — Lowell had not yet sent it. He is ill in New York, of ophthalmia. Immediately upon receipt of it, or before, I will forward the money you were both so kind as to lend, which is eight to Dow, and three and a half to Thomas. What a confounded business I have got myself into, attempting to write a letter to two people at once!

However, this is for Dow. My dear fellow, thank you a thousand times for your kindness and great forbearance, and don't say a word about the cloak turned inside out, or other peccadilloes of that nature. Also, express to your wife my deep regret for the vexation I must have occasioned her. Send me, also if you can, the letter to Blythe. Call, also, at the barber's shop just above *Fuller's* and pay for me a levy which I believe I owe. And now, God bless you, for a nobler fellow never lived.

And this for Thomas. My dear friend, forgive me my petulance and don't believe I meant, all I said. Believe me, I am very grateful to you for your many attentions and forbearances, and the time will never come when I shall forget either them or you. Remember me to the Don, whose mustachios I do admire after all, and who was about the finest figure I ever beheld — also to Dr. Fraily. Please express my regret to Mr. Fuller for making such a fool of myself in his house, and say to him (if you think necessary) that I should not have got half so drunk on his port wine but for the rummy coffee with which I was forced to wash it down. I should be glad, too, if you would take an opportunity of saying to Mr. Rob Tyler that if he *can* look over matters and get me the inspectorship I will join the Washingtonian's forthwith. I am serious as a judge — and much (more) so than many. I think it would be a feather in Mr. Tyler's cap to save from the perils of mint julep — and ' Port Wines ' — a young man of whom all the world thinks so well and who thinks so remarkably well of himself.

And now, my dear friends, good-bye, and believe me most truly yours,

EDGAR A. POE

F. W. Thomas put a note on this letter which coming from the hand of Poe's best friend has an important bearing on his character:

This letter explains itself. While his friends were trying to get Poe a place he came on to Washington in the way he mentions. He was soon quite sick, and while he was so Dow wrote to one of his friends in Philadelphia about him! Poor fellow. A place had been promised his friends for him, and in that state of suspense which is so trying to all men, and particularly to men of imagination, he presented himself in Washington certainly not in a way to advance his interests. I have seen a great deal of Poe, and it was his excessive and at times marked sociality which forced him into his ' frolics,' rather than any morbid appetite for drink, but if he took but one glass of weak wine or beer or cider, the rubicon of the cup had been passed with him, and it almost always ended in excess and sickness. But he fought against the propensity as hard as ever Coleridge fought against it, and I am inclined to believe, after his sad experience and suffering, if he could have gotten office with a fixed salary, beyond the need of literary labour, that he would have redeemed himself at least this time. The accounts of his derelictions in this respect after I knew him were much exaggerated. I have seen men who drank bottles of wine to Poe's wine-glasses who yet escaped all imputations of intemperance. His was one of those temperaments whose only safety is total abstinence. He suffered terribly after any indiscretion. And after all what Byron said of Sheridan was truer of Poe: —

' . . . Ah, little do they know
That what to them seemed vice
might be but woe '

and, moreover, there is a great deal of heartache in the jestings of this letter.

This is kindly and well meant, but like much interested evidence offered to the jury must be largely struck out as irrelevant. Whether Poe drank by the bottle or the cup, steadily or at infrequent intervals, is all beside the mark. The point is, after all, that from some caüse, drink he did; and, when he did so, the results were disastrous. With an already shattered nervous system the effect of alcohol was to make him impossible. All the evidence points to the fact that, when alcoholically inspired, he was insufferable. To this, and his own implacable literary vendettas, he owed the worst and most inveterate enemies he made. His intellectual greatness, insight, and even pompous dignity; his morbid sensitiveness, were alike set at naught and outraged by the caricature of himself which he exhibited when under the influence. Leonardo da Vinci once remarked, " The worst thing in the world is a bad reputation — the cause of a bad reputation is vice." Poe's spiritual excuse lies in the fact that he was not vicious. He did not drink because he was abandoned, but because a nervous weakness demanded the artificial courage of a stimulant of some kind to enable him to confront the world.[610] It was, at once, an escape and an apparent means to temporary strength. Conviviality no doubt played a part. What is there " mysterious " about all this? A million such persons walk the streets today. The inevitable results of such excesses, and the hopelessness of appeal to those whose will power is subservient to a chemical reaction, is an universal phenomenon familiar to all mankind. In the case of Poe, it was a concomitant rather than a cause. His prime trouble lay infinitely deeper.

To those who are familiar with some of the outstanding types of American character, there is a niche into which Edgar Allan Poe fits to a certain extent in his *minor* aspects. It is that of the proud, quixotic, cavalierly mannered, and superficial Southerner with a little military training; more specifically, a Virginian of a certain brand. For some reason, probably partially connected with slavery, the old South of the plantation system conserved and bred this type to perfection. It is picturesque, professionally ardent, and regards itself so unmistakably as a social ornament and boon, that its superficial ear marks are often accepted at more than par value. Its motive force is a provincial pride. Add a little, or a great deal of alcohol, as the case may be, or any other " spiritual " irritant to this human compound, and the result is more than usually insufferable: Pride becomes arrogance; manners became mannerisms; courage becomes foolhardiness; and self-assurance turns to insult. The predicament, never understood by themselves, in which such types are then placed, is one of hostility with the world at large — a much larger world than provincialism permits them to surmise. To the immigrant generations following the American Civil War this " cavalier type " has become harmless and romantic. At an earlier date, its social and political implication to the times was more clearly understood. In some quarters, therefore, there was, to such a gentleman from the plantations, a smouldering hostility rooted in fear.

Poe had been brought up in Richmond, Virginia, in a family which aspired to, and partially succeeded, in establishing itself in the aristocracy of the plantation. That he had not been included, that to a certain extent he had been thrust out of its bosom, only confirmed in him the determination to persist in the characteristic manners and attitudes of the Cavalier School. " I am a Virginian — at least I was born and raised in Richmond," is his own statement of the case. He had chosen to reside in the North. When " the great Southern Poet " went on a spree, the world in general was not privy to any more subtle cause for the trouble which followed, than the liquor from the same bottle out of which it also replenished its own glass. The results with Mr. Poe were abnormal, but they were nevertheless characteristic. In these years of grace, a discourse on the technique of carrying liquor is not in order. The year 1843, however, was another régime, and, without digressing, it may be safely inferred that whatever small skill Mr. Poe may have had in that gentlemanly art hailed from south of the Potomac. To his own unpsychological generation, he appeared upon numerous occasions in the then well-known character of " A Bad Man from Virginia on a spree." Nor is this by any means so superficial a characterization as might, at first blush, appear. Differences of manners and custom, indicating, as they often do, the springs of moral action, are among the most profound which provoke the antipathies of men.

Poe's behavior on the trip to Washington in March, 1843, seems to have been a case in point. He lost and alienated many friends. Thomas was forced to apologize to himself and others about him, as we have seen; and Dow, who was certainly not one to be squeamish, was hardly very glad. He never resumed intercourse with Poe on the same cordial basis. The fact that he never received back the eight dollars which he lent to Poe, may have had some bearing in so personal a matter.[721] Poe, it must be said, was indeed hard pressed from now on — close-followed by misfortune after misfortune. The last scene of the comedy to obtain for him the government position now took place in Washington, as his next stroke of ill luck.

On March 26, Thomas visited the White House. He there had an interview with President Tyler who inquired in a kindly way about Mr. Poe. Robert Tyler was out, but the President's other son John, who was in the room, bluntly told his father that he wished he would appoint Poe to an office in Philadelphia. Before the President could reply, a servant entered and called him out. The interruption was fatal, for the necessary executive "remark," whatever it might have been, was never made.[629]

If matters up to a certain point had fared well for the *Stylus,* Lowell's venture with the *Pioneer* proved to have been planted in stony ground. The magazine failed with the fourth number in March, 1843, leaving Lowell bankrupt, while, for a time, it appeared that he was going blind. The omissions in the letters he wrote to Poe at this time show that he could hardly see, yet a kindly spirit and a great courage breathes through them. Both Poe and Lowell were under great tribulations in the Spring of 1843 and yet, in their touch, both seem to have brought out the best in each other's nature. When Lowell wrote to Poe (March 24, 1843) telling him of the wreck of his hopes, but promising to pay for *The Tell-Tale Heart* and other items, Poe replied:

> MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have just received yours of the 24th, first that you should have been so unfortunate, and secondly that you should

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[629] Thomas to Poe, Washington, March 27, 1843.

> have thought it necessary to offer me any apology for your misfortunes. As for the few dollars you owe me — give yourself not one moment's concern about *them*. I am poor, but must be very much poorer, indeed, when I think of demanding them. . . .[630]

How he could have been much poorer than he was when he wrote this, it is hard to surmise. The wolf was once more at the door. Poe and Lowell continued to write each other through the Spring and early Summer. In the same letter in which he reassures Lowell about his debts to him, Poe announces that the *Stylus* is to appear the first of July following, and asks Lowell to obtain an article from Hawthorne for the first number. Later on Lowell himself is requested to contribute a sketch of his life and a portrait, which he promises to do. He also contributed a poem. Their communication in this time of adversity was affectionate.[631] "With all truth and love I remain your friend, J. R. L." — and with Poe it was "My dear Friend," a most unusual form of address for him. Lowell had retired to his father's house in Cambridge to write *Prometheus*. His eyes had recovered.

> My address will be 'Cambridge, Mass.,' in future. I do hope and trust *your* magazine will succeed. Be very watchful of your publisher and agents. They must be driven as men drive swine, take your eyes off them for an instant and they bolt between your legs and leave you in the mire.[632]
>
> J. R. L.

It was more of a prophecy than a warning. Less than a month later Poe writes Lowell, "Alas! my magazine scheme has exploded." Mr. Clarke had withdrawn. Poe lays it to his "idiocy" and "imbecility," but that was probably only a disappointed man's expression for the common sense of his more cautious partner.

The Washington irregularities seem to be indicative of what went on, quite frequently, through the rest of the year. Mr.

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[630] Poe to Lowell, March 27, 1843.

[631] Lowell to Poe, May 8, 1843, "Your early poems display a maturity which astonishes me and I recollect no individual (and I believe I have read all the poetry that was ever written) whose early poems were anything like as good. Shelley is nearest, perhaps."

[632] Lowell to Poe, April 17, 1843.

Clarke's faith was no doubt thoroughly shaken by the events of the trip, after Dow's letter, and ensuing lapses seem to have confirmed him in the opinion that, however brilliant Poe may have been as an editor or from a literary standpoint, he was by no means the type of man, from a business perspective, upon which one could risk a considerable and hard accumulated capital. The *Stylus* was dead! Poe never gave it up; he had come so near! The engravings and the articles were all ready — Lowell's poem went to Griswold — but the magazine remained a dream that never materialized. It failed to take form, as it failed again, for the same cause.[623]

Poe's financial predicament was now of the worst. There was literally not a *sou* in the house, and Virginia was again very ill, as this letter shows:

> DEAR GRISWOLD, — Can you not send me $5? I am sick and Virginia is almost gone. Come and see me. Peterson says you suspect me of a curious anonymous letter. I did not write it, but bring it along with you when you make the visit you promised to Mrs. Clemm. I will try to fix the matter soon. Could you do anything with my *note?*[633]
>
> Yours truly,
> E. A. P.

That Poe should have had to appeal to Griswold shows that his need was indeed extreme. The money it appears was sent. Poe had been playing fast and loose with Griswold in his reviews of the latter's anthology and had used the columns of the *Museum* to poke a good deal of annoying sarcasm at " Dr. Driswold."

Griswold was living in a boarding-house at Eighth and Chestnut Streets where he had met a lady who was supposed to be wealthy. The pair were married, and the wealth proved to be a dream. As the lady is said to have been possessed of even less beauty than gold, Mr. Griswold's state of mind was for some time quite savage.[600] It seems to have been about this time that he began to persecute his colleague, Peterson, by anonymous letters and articles. Mr. Graham afterward discharged him for this. It is probably such a letter to which Poe refers and denies writing. Griswold had evidently attempted to pin the blame on Poe. He knew that Poe had again been offered the chair at *Graham's* that Mr. Graham was dissatisfied with him (Griswold), and that Peterson was an able man. The inference, taking the character of the Reverend Doctor into consideration, seems plain.

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[633] Written in June 11, 1843, to Griswold at the office of *Graham's Magazine.*

It was about this time that Poe himself began to be greatly troubled by anonymous rumors circulated in Philadelphia about him. For those in regard to his drinking he had himself to blame. In addition to this, however, his name was coupled in a highly scandalous manner with the good lady who had opened her house to him at Saratoga Springs while he was ill.[634] The sources of these rumors can never be proved, but one of them may be strongly suspected. The beginnings of a nervous state of mind which later permitted Poe to harbor genuine delusions of persecutions were already present, and these rumors were undoubtedly a prime cause in driving him out of Philadelphia. It was a *dénouement* which, in certain quarters, was highly welcome.

During these periods when Poe was ill, Mrs. Clemm's strength and efforts alone supported the household. What little strength Poe had, was used up in writing, and he had no energy left with which to vend his wares.

> She was the ever-vigilant guardian of the home watching it against the silent but continuous sap of necessity, that appeared every day to be approaching closer and closer. She was the sole servant, keeping everything clean; the sole messenger, doing the errands, making pilgrimages between the poet and his publishers, frequently bringing back such chilling responses as 'The article not accepted,' or, 'The check not to be given until such and such a day,' often too late for his necessities. And she was also the messenger to the market; from it bringing back not 'the delicacies of the season,' but only such commodities as were called for by the dire exigencies of hunger.

Thus runs the evidence of Captain Mayne Reid who was much about the Spring Garden Street house at that time. The Sunday

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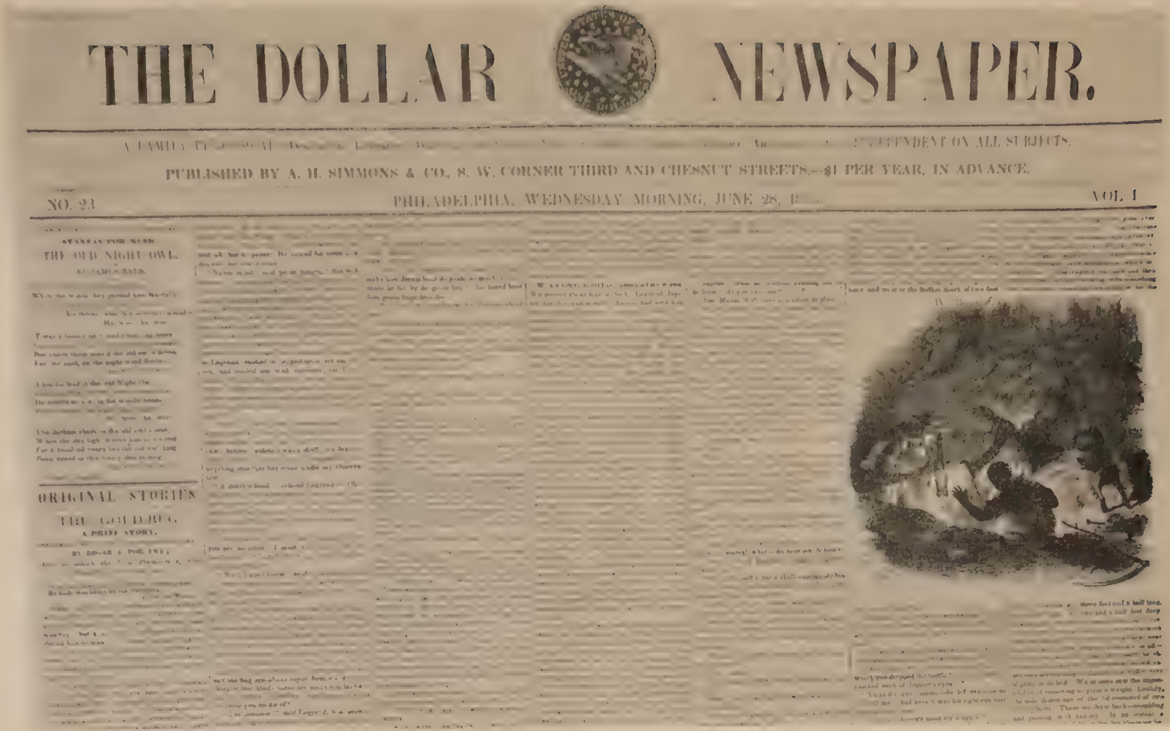
[634] Thomas Dunn English, *Reminiscences of Poe*, the *Independent*, October 22, 1896, speaking of Poe's reasons for leaving Philadelphia: "I happen to know why, and there were several others who knew all about it. They are all, I believe dead, I am the sole possessor of the scandalous secret, and as its recital would do no good to any one, the whole affair should be buried with me." See also Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, notes, page 424.



THE DOLLAR NEWSPAPER.

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THE OLD NIGHT OWL.

ORIGINAL STORIES

Reproduction of the Page of the Philadelphia *Dollar Newspaper*

In which Poe's $100 prize story of *The Gold Bug* appeared in 1843
Also showing one of Darley's illustrations

From a rare file of the Dollar Newspaper. *Courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society*

morning breakfasts with Hirst must have now been few and far between, although Poe was still a great deal at his office.

As a consequence on July 19, 1843, he registered in the District Court of Philadelphia as a student of law with Henry B. Hirst for legal preceptor. This, of course, came to nothing, and was probably merely a result of his interest in copyright law and Hirst's influence.[600]

After the *Stylus* bubble had burst, Poe addressed a letter to his cousin William Poe of Baltimore asking for a loan of $50, and describing his misfortunes. The latter had replied (May 15, 1843) refusing the loan, and evidently reproaching Poe for his weakness. By this time, the news seems to have been pretty well abroad. Poe did not reply, and, in a second letter a month later, his cousin in a somewhat softened tone again writes him congratulating him on winning a prize offered by the *Dollar Newspaper*. One passage in the letter is significant and much quoted:

> There is one thing I am anxious to caution you against and which has been a great enemy to our family,[635] — I hope, however, in your own case, it may prove unnecessary, — 'a too free use of the Bottle.' Too many, and especially literary characters, have sought to drown their sorrows and disappointments by this means, but in vain, and only, when it has been too late, discovered it to be a deeper source of misery. But enough of this say you, and so say I. . . .

The only outstanding success of the year 1843 was the prize secured by Poe's most widely read story, *The Gold Bug*. He had originally written it, probably in 1842, for publication in the *Stylus*. That not being possible, he had offered it to Mr. Graham who had accepted it. The *Dollar Newspaper,* published just below *Graham's* in the same building, had later offered a prize of $100 for the best short story submitted under the terms of a contest. Poe now begged the story from Mr. Graham who returned the manuscript, accepting a critical article instead. The *Dollar Newspaper* was edited by Joseph Sailor who knew Poe well. Although this had no bearing on the award of the prize, which was made by a committee of judges, Sailor's notices of the award were exceedingly laudatory of Poe. *The Gold Bug,* appeared in the *Dollar Newspaper* for June 21, and 28, 1843, and was again reprinted as a whole with two other prize stories, as a supplement for July 12. It was by far the most popular of any tale Poe had done and had a large success, attracting wide notice and printed comment. The story was cleverly illustrated by F. O. C. Darley who was to have been the artist for the defunct *Stylus.*

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[635] Too much has been made of this quotation. The same remark might be made about almost any "family." There are few who cannot remember hearing of several bibulous relatives.

The great popularity of this story was undoubtedly partly due to the fact that, in it, the morbid strain so predominant in Poe was largely absent. A few skulls and corpses crept in, but they might be expected in a story of pirate gold. The retrospective tendency, which Poe had already shown in several of his other stories, was, in this, especially strong, and the author seems to have remembered with almost photographic accuracy the details of his environment on Sullivan's Island fifteen years before.[636] The only characteristic of the Philadelphia period which crept into it was the cryptogram, a subject which Poe could not then get out of his mind. The example of cipher writing, Poe gives here, is comparatively simple. That he had taken great pains with the story, there can be no doubt. As first printed, the cryptogram was not entirely correct, and several years later Poe was at some pains to correct it and make further minor alterations and additions to the text.[299]

Not long after *The Gold Bug* appeared, the *United States Saturday Post,* which was a temporary disguise assumed by the *Saturday Evening Post,* published a charge that the story had been plagiarized from one called *Imogene, or the Pirate's Treasure* by a Miss Shesburne, in the *Spirit of the Times.* That publication made considerable noise in favor of Miss Shesburne, but a refutation in the *Dollar Newspaper* for July 12, put the ghost to rest. The real merit of *The Gold Bug* lay in the originality of the plot and the sheer fascination of narrative. The characters are only sketched, and the realism lies in the accurate reproduction of the scenes. This tale, in reality, belongs, in spirit, to the "grotesques."

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[636] For a full discussion of *The Gold Bug* and the environment from which it sprang, see Chapter XI, *Israfel in Carolina.*

The only other stories of importance, published in the year 1843, were *The Tell-Tale Heart,* probably an imaginative rendering of Poe's attack of heart disease in 1842, and *The Black Cat* in the *United States Saturday Post* for July. The latter shows a strongly marked tendency to return to the horrors of *Arthur Gordon Pym,* and accentuates the fact, that no matter what the plot, Poe's consciousness insisted upon forcing upon him the same kind of imagery, regardless of the medium or the material he used. The treatment the cat received from its master, the terrible effect of its eye, and the punishment which fell upon its persecutor, represent the fact that Poe could not help but revel in such cruelty, yet he must condemn it too, and bring punishment upon the perpetrator. He thus attempted to absolve himself from the feeling of conscious condemnation which his involuntary dreams aroused. In *The Murders in the Rue Morgue,* the moral issue is entirely dodged by making the criminal an ape; thus a double horror was invoked without the necessity of blame.[637]

The high tide of Poe's creative ability had been reached in 1841–42. *The Gold Bug, The Tell-Tale Heart,* and *The Black Cat,* although published later, belong to the earlier period of his working crest, as well as the, for him, singularly charming and innocent sketch of *The Elk.* From 1842 on, Poe began physically and mentally to disintegrate. In 1843 the process was rapid, most of his work was of the hack variety, or critical articles of doubtful value. In August, he writes his friend Tomlin, "I was obliged to make a vow I would engage in the solution of no more cryptographs." The reason he gives is, that by the number offered for solution, he was "absolutely overwhelmed." In reality he had neither the vigor nor the inclination to continue. There was never any period when he had more time. He now grew more irritable and suspicious, scented plagiarism in the air, and became more biting in his criticism. Even his friend Henry B. Hirst was partially cast off some time before Poe left Philadelphia. Hirst, it seems, had committed the unpardonable sin of paradying Poe —

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[637] The attempt to use these stories and other works of Poe as models which young "authors," desirous of obtaining a mechanical proficiency in writing the short story, can follow, is one of the most absurd exercises yet devised by the academic mind attempting to be a wet nurse to the creative. No consciousness except the peculiar and abnormal one of Poe could conceive such imagery, the events, or the order in which they occur. The suggestion that, by their logical analyses, a similar deranged and morbid product will be fostered in the pupil is the inference that must be drawn. Nor is Poe's style to be "taught." Style above all things is the man himself. The fascination of these stories lies in the fact that their logic is the mad rationalization of a dream. Both the dream and the order of words in which it congealed, are the product of a peculiar personality which, to try to reproduce in the alembic of the classroom, is a laughable waste of time.

Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.

Had been rendered by the madcap young lawyer —

Never nigger shook a shin-bone
In a dance-house half so fair.

The breakfasts at Spring Garden Street and the Sunday excursions were immediately a thing of the past.[638]

There is some evidence that, in the Summer of 1843, Poe again visited at the house of the lady at Saratoga Springs, but the matter is somewhat confused.[612] He was greatly worried by the talk which now went around about it, however, and there was other gossip which found its way into print and private letters.

During the Summer, an anonymous article containing a peculiarly vicious attack on Poe appeared in one of the Philadelphia newspapers. Poe very rightly suspected Griswold, who had by that time been dismissed by Mr. Graham for the similar attempt on Charles Peterson, the source of which had been traced down. Whatever unfortunate basis of truth there was behind the assertions of Poe's bibulous and, at times, irresponsible conduct, it still remains as a cold fact that Rufus Griswold undoubtedly played the part to Poe during his life, and after his death, of a false friend. After sending the $5 which Poe had begged from him in the letter in June,[633] Griswold had visited next day at Spring Garden Street and afterward described the cottage:

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[638] Statement by T. H. Lane. This cannot be entirely substantiated. Poe seems later, according to Mr. J. H. Whitty, to have helped both Hirst and his relatives in placing poems with the *Southern Literary Messenger.*

> When he once sent for me to visit him, during a period of illness caused by protracted and anxious watching at the side of his sick wife, I was impressed by the singular neatness and the air of refinement in his home. It was a small house, in one of the pleasant and silent neighborhoods far from the center of the town, and though slightly and cheaply furnished everything in it was so tasteful and so fitly disposed that it seemed altogether suitable for a man of genius. For this and for most of the comforts he enjoyed, in his brightest as in his darkest years, he was chiefly indebted to his mother-in-law, who loved him with more than maternal devotion and constancy.

There can be no doubt that it was in Philadelphia, during the Spring and Summer of 1843, that Griswold became unhappily familiar with the presence of Mrs. Clemm, who was frequently at that time forced to carry Edgar's manuscripts to *Graham's,* or the offices of other publications, and to call upon the editors to dun them for payment or advances while playing upon their sympathy. Through Mrs. Clemm, Griswold and others became privy to the inmost troubles of the Poe household and the shadow of its tragedy. That Griswold used this information to strike with a concealed hand against Poe, and that he afterward exploited Mrs. Clemm in her dire poverty, while at the same time realizing upon the writings of his dead friend and damning his reputation, is a proven fact which must be remembered when taking his evidence.

Poe also suspected his friend, L. A. Wilmer of intimate Baltimore memories, of attacking him, and on August 28, 1843, writes to his friend Tomlin, the literary postmaster at Jackson, Tennessee, as follows:

> And now my dear friend, have you forgotten that I asked you, some time since, to render me an important favor. You can surely have no scruples in a case of this kind. I have reason to believe that I have been maligned by some envious scoundrel in this city, who has written you a letter respecting myself. I believe I know the villain's name. It is Wilmer. In Philadelphia no one speaks of him. He is avoided by all as a reprobate of the lowest class. . . .

This was going it a bit strong. Wilmer had indeed, for a while, been treading the primrose path, knocking about from one newspaper to another, and burning the candle at both ends. He was not without many friends, however, and later on — having sowed the fields of youth with considerable zest — settled down to a decided minor success. After Poe's death, he became one of his most zealous defenders against the attacks of Griswold, whom he detested. Tomlin enclosed Wilmer's letter to Poe which proved harmless enough, in reality, although disturbing:

> Edgar A. Poe (you know him by character, no doubt, if not personally) has become one of the strangest of our literati. He and I are old friends, and have known each other from boyhood, and it gives me inexpressable pain to notice the vagaries to which he has lately become subject. Poor fellow; he is not a teetotaller by any means, and I fear he is going to destruction, moral, physical and intellectual. . . .

It was the pity in this, as much as anything else, that would offend Poe. But there can be little doubt that Wilmer's statement was literally true.

August, 1843, to the Spring of 1844, when Poe left Philadelphia, may be regarded as a swift slope in the life of Poe, down which he slid rapidly to emerge on the plain of New York a man much altered for the worse. The main causes for this must be seen in the sick-bed of Virginia in the Spring Garden cottage, and the stimulants which, at this time, Poe resorted to for surcease from troubles which were more than he could bear.

As we have seen, Virginia represented for him a compromise with the driving passion of life, which was necessary to his peace of mind. The explanation which is reluctantly forced upon one, as the whole of the facts of his strange marriage and Poe's relations with other women are passed in review, and calmly considered, is that Poe was psychically inhibited. That he was actually physically impotent does not appear, either in the appearance of the man, the facts of his history, or the record of his creative work. There is a virility, even if a thwarted and sometimes morbid kind, in his creative and critical writing which is decidedly masculine. His continued interest in women is also indicative. To state that

Poe was literally impotent is to assume a theory that is beyond the realm of proof.

The difficulty in presenting and understanding Poe and the relation of his personality to his creative work is that his physical and psychic make-up were enormously and peculiarly complex. Any simple and easy explanation, however desirable and superficially attractive to a biographer and his audience, is bound to be misleading and contrary to fact.

At best, since the man himself is removed beyond the realms of a direct medical inquiry, only an approach to the problem can be made, though the evidence strongly points to the conclusion that the root of Poe's misfortunes, agony, and shipwreck, as well as his power as a literary artist, lay in some inhibition of his sexual life.

That Virginia could never have provided for him the normal relations of the adult married state is scarcely to be rationally disputed. She was a child of thirteen when he married her, and her rapid progress down the steep glacis of tuberculosis precludes the possibility of any considerable time when normal relations could have been established. In Philadelphia, in January, 1842, as we have seen, her invalidism became acute with periods of sinking and hemorrhages of the lungs. From then on she was dying. At times both Poe and Mrs. Clemm gave her up for lost. There is also the evidence of Mrs. Clemm about the nature of his marriage with her daughter, the character of which she afterward did not attempt to disguise. A Mrs. Phelps who knew her says:[639]

> . . . Mrs. Clemm, his aunt, was my mother's dear friend. I know something about . . . (the marriage) having *heard my mother and Mrs. Clemm discuss it*. He did not love his cousin, except as a dear cousin, when he married her, but she was fondly attached to him and was frail and consumptive. While she lived he devoted himself to her with all the ardor of a lover. . . .

Why was it, then, that he devoted himself to her "with all the ardor of a lover," as there can be no doubt that he did, and that the very thought of losing her at times drove him temporarily mad? It was not because he was physically incapable, but because, consciously or unconsciously, he feared the devastating effects upon himself of being released to other women, where the full implications of love were inevitably involved. That Poe pitied and "loved" Virginia with the yearning of a truly noble sympathy it is useless and cruelly narrow to deny, but that his madness at the contemplation of her loss involved himself primarily and her secondarily, is also and more pertinently true.

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[639] *Newark Courier,* July 19, 1900.

The man was so nervously and complexly organized that the strong emotions of sex, the most profound and disturbing in the world, threatened not only to make all creative work impossible but literally to drive him insane. The anticipation of it was more than he could bear; the realization of it, after Virginia's death at Fordham, confirmed his fears. In a few months, after a desperate effort to again attain some basis of physical and mental equilibrium, he was thrown off the edge of the world by the momentum of his own hopeless troubles with a cry for mercy to the Spirit of the gulf beyond. Strange as it may seem, while she existed, this frail, barren and tubercular little girl constituted for Edgar Allan Poe, the dreamer, an essential compromise with reality. His decline was largely coincident with hers. As the pale blue flame of her life flickered and jumped at the wick and threatened to go out, he solaced himself and found refuge in drugs and alcohol. These, in turn, produced and added their own fatal elements to the facts of disintegration so that the result was vastly accelerated. It was in the Summer of 1843 that Wilmer writes to his friend Tomlin, "I fear he is going to destruction, moral, physical, and intellectual." Mr. Poe was angry, but his friend was right.

A few weeks later, September 13, 1843, Poe himself writes to Lowell. "Since I last wrote you (June 20), I have suffered much from domestic and pecuniary misfortune, and at one period, had nearly succumbed." He is then forced to ask him for the $10 due, which Lowell remitted although in great financial distress. For the most part Poe was now sitting by Virginia's bedside nursing her, but ill himself, and in an agony of apprehension. When he did sally forth it was to wander about the streets in that condition described afterward by Griswold who knew him most intimately at this time:

> . . . He walked the streets, in madness or melancholy, with lips moving in indistinct curses, or with eyes upturned in passionate prayers, (never for himself, for he felt, or professed to feel, that he was already damned,) but for their happiness who were at the moment the objects of his idolatry; or with his glance introverted to a heart gnawed with anguish, and with a face shrouded in gloom, he would brave the wildest storms; and at night, with drenched garments and arms wildly beating the wind and rain he would speak as if to spirits that at such times only could be evoked by him from that Aidenn close by (behind) whose portals his distributed soul sought to forget the ills to which his constitution subjected him. . . .

It was such wanderings as this that gave rise to the rumors that so troubled him. When he was thus loose in the streets, there was no telling where he might go, and it was generally Mrs. Clemm who rescued him and nursed him back to some resemblance to normal manhood. The rambles of Israfel, however, were not always so spiritually romantic as the style of Dr. Griswold might lead us to believe.

Howard Paul, a young Philadelphian, the nephew of Mr. Clarke who had backed the *Stylus,* remembered Poe vividly and tells of him in a convivial and social hour, " warmed with wine and in a genial, glowing mood " — of his brilliant, and, as the dinner progressed, erratic conversation. Paul has left an excellent word picture of Poe as he appeared in 1843:

> Poe was a slight, small boned, delicate looking man, with a well-developed head, which at a glance, seemed out of proportion to his slender body. His features were regular, his complexion pale; and his nose was Grecian and well-moulded, his eyes large and luminous, and when excited, peculiarly vivid and penetrating. He dressed with neatness, and there was a suggestion of hauteur in his manner towards strangers. He was impatient of restraint or contradiction, and when his Southern blood was up, as the saying goes, he could be cuttingly rude and bitterly sarcastic.[640]

Thomas Dunn English also noticed the small bones — " the hands like bird claws " — and the rest of Paul's description tallies with several others. From Paul also comes the information that Poe about this time had again turned his attention to drama. There is here a unique mention of the scenario of a tragedy that he projected about this time with a Philadelphia friend, Dr. Bird. About this "play" nothing more is known.

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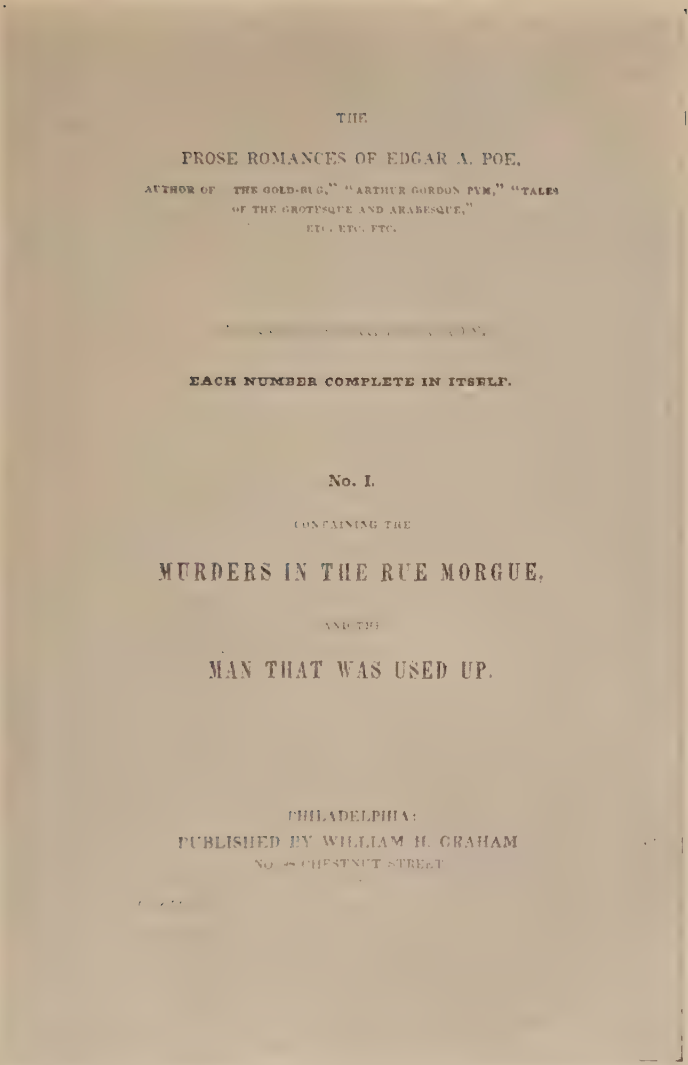
[640] Howard Paul in *Munsey's Magazine* for September, 1892.

When the generosity of his friends, or his connection with the press would permit, he visited the theater, and, it is said, he became friends with the father of Edwin Booth (J. B. Booth). Returning from the play one night, when both were in a high-flown condition, they laid hands upon an unfortunate Jew who offended them and suspended him "by his breeches on the spikes of a convenient area railing, where they left him kicking and howling while they pursued their tortuous way in gladsome mood." It was precisely the kind of joke which would have appealed to the practical side of the curious humor of Mr. Poe.

After Dr. Griswold's dismissal from *Graham's*, Poe began once again to contribute, to some extent, to the critical columns. It was apparently in the Winter of 1843–44, when his fortunes were at so low an ebb, that he attempted to sell an early draft of *The Raven* to his old friend and editor there. According to Rosenbach, who had known Poe both on *Burton's* and *Graham's*, the poet came into the office one day with the manuscript of the poem in his pocket saying that his wife and Mrs. Clemm were starving and that he was destitute of funds. The poem was then read by those in the office, Graham, and probably Charles Peterson, who did not care to accept it. Godey seems also to have been present. Poe, however, was insistent both as to the poem's merits and his own needs. So Mr. Graham, in order to arrive at some solution, called in the rest of the magazine force and agreed to abide by their decision. Poe then read *The Raven* himself to the audience of clerks and ink-faced printers' devils, who agreed with Mr. Graham. The poem was not accepted, but out of commiseration for its author, and pity for their former editor, the hat was passed among those present and $15 was collected for Virginia and Mrs. Clemm. The money was given to Mrs. Clemm. Godey contributed. It would appear from this that the nadir had about been reached. It was greatly to the benefit of the poem, however, for Poe continued to work upon it for several years.



THE

PROSE ROMANCES OF EDGAR A. POE,

AUTHOR OF "THE GOLD-BUG," "ARTHUR GORDON PYM," "TALES
OF THE GROTESQUE AND ARABESQUE,"
ETC. ETC. ETC.

[illegible]

EACH NUMBER COMPLETE IN ITSELF.

No. I.

CONTAINING THE

MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE,

AND THE

MAN THAT WAS USED UP.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM H. GRAHAM
NO. [illegible] CHESTNUT STREET

Title Page of *The Prose Romances of Edgar A. Poe*

Combined wrapper and title page of the rare paper-bound edition of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," and "The Man that was Used Up." — No. I.

The seventh in the series of Poe's publications

Courtesy of a New York Collector

Note. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* is known to exist under this title alone in an octavo pamphlet. As this is thought to have been a salesman's dummy, and so not published, it is not reproduced here as a "published work." It is the rarest of all Poe items

Almost all of the work and projects of this time bear the marks of having been undertaken by a man in a nervous state who could not carry any long task to a conclusion. With the waning of his power to do long sustained work in prose, Poe now began, after an interval of some years, to turn his attention to poetry. He was, as we have seen, working sporadically at *The Raven.* January, 1843, had seen his first notable new poem for some time, *The Conqueror Worm,* published in *Graham's.* Lowell had received *Lenore,* a vastly improved version of the verses written first at West Point, and dealing with the lost loves of the Richmond period. Naturally enough, with Virginia's state, the theme was again brought to mind, and death stalked notably in *The Conqueror Worm.*

Poe now, also, again attempted another issue of his collected prose tales published in Philadelphia sometime during the Fall of 1843. This was to have been a cheap edition for popular consumption to be completed by further numbers. Evidently the project failed, probably through lack of sales, and only one issue is known in paper covers, originally priced at 12½ cents, entitled: *The Prose Romances of Edgar A. Poe. . . . No. I. The Murders of the Rue Morgue and The Man that was Used Up.* 1843, 8vo, pp. 40, paper. Philadelphia: published by William H. Graham, No. 98 Chestnut Street, 1843.

In the list of Poe's books, this may be considered his seventh "volume." It was handled by at least two bookstores in Philadelphia with small success, and was soon allowed to go out of print with no further numbers added to the unique "No. I." Copies of it are excessively rare.

As neither his work nor his publishing ventures brought him enough to live on, like many another poet in a similar financial quandary, Poe now began to lay plans to deliver lectures. In March, 1843, he had published in *Graham's* his *Rationale of Verse.* Lowell tried to obtain for him an appearance before the Boston Lyceum, but the proposal received a cold shoulder, a fact which may have influenced Poe in his hostility to the same audience some years later, as he never forgot a repulse. On November 25 he delivered a lecture before the William Wirt Literary Institute in Philadelphia on " American Poetry," in which he took the occasion to pay his respects to Griswold in revenge for the anonymous article. The affair created a considerable stir at the time. Both the Doctor and his anthology came in for some well-placed and very caustic criticism. He and Poe were not " on terms " again for about two years. This was the only occasion upon which Poe appeared personally before a fashionable " Quaker " audience. On January 11, 1844, he repeated the same lecture at Odd Fellows' Hall in Baltimore. The returns, of course, were small.

Poe was now about at the end of his string in Philadelphia. He had " withdrawn " from the editorship of two magazines; failed to start one of his own; and was known to be unreliable in his habits and a doubtful quantity to deal with personally in a dozen other magazine sanctums and newspaper offices in the town. Mrs. Clemm had made her rounds; publishers had found his tales a useless venture and — worst of all — scandal was busy with his name. With the outstanding literary reputation of the locality, Poe's personality, misfortunes, and irregularities, in a place where they were common gossip, made further advantageous contacts and associations impossible. The situation was much the same in both Baltimore and Richmond. His attacks on Longfellow and the New England school had also marked Boston off the list of possible removes. New York was therefore the only great literary center left where he might still hope to make a new place for himself.

For the first four months of 1844, the whereabouts and doings of Poe cannot be satisfactorily traced. Some little time before leaving Philadelphia the family must have given up the Spring Garden Street house, whence most of the pawnable articles had disappeared already. During Poe's occupancy of the place it had changed hands, having been bought from the landlord, William M. Albruger, who owned it when Poe first rented it, by Jessie White on January 7, 1843. Before the end came, Mrs. Clemm had evidently resorted to every known means to keep the kettle boiling. A schoolteacher who lived near by describes the appearance of the little house with its giant pear tree, the scraggly rose-

> bush, carefully pruned by Mrs. Clemm, that grew over the little porch, and the dooryard with the grass plot and garden.
>
> Twice a day, on my way to and from school, I had to pass their house; and in summer time often saw them. In the mornings Mrs. Clemm and her daughter would be generally watering the flowers, which they had in a bed under the windows. They seemed always cheerful and happy, and I could hear Mrs. Poe's laugh before I turned the corner (Seventh and Spring Garden). Mrs. Clemm was always busy. I have seen her of mornings clearing the front yard, washing the windows and the stoop, and even white-washing the palings. You would notice how clean and orderly everything looked. She rented out her front rooms to lodgers, and used the middle room, next to the kitchen for their own living room or parlor. They must have slept under the roof. We never heard they were poor, and they kept pretty much to themselves in the two years we lived near them. I don't think that in that time I saw Mr. Poe half a dozen times. We heard he was dissipated, but he always appeared like a gentleman, though thin and sickly looking. . . .[641]

From the same evidence it also appears that Mrs. Clemm was a dress and coat maker, and that Virginia helped her and was at times to be seen sewing on the front stoop. " She was pretty, but not noticeably so. She was too fleshy."

Towards the end of the Philadelphia stay, in the Spring of 1844, Poe, it appears, was much away from the house.

> His dissipation was too notorious to be denied; and for days, and even weeks at a time, he would be sharing the bachelor life and quarters of his associates, who were not aware that he was a married man. He would, on some evenings when sober, come to the rooms occupied by himself and some other writers for the press and, producing the manuscript of *The Raven,* read to them the last additions to it, asking their opinions and suggestions. He seemed to be having difficulty with it, and to be very doubtful as to its merits as a poem. The general opinion of these critics was against it. . . .[642]

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[641] From a description given by the schoolteacher to Mrs. Weiss. The school was probably the one next door to the Poes' on the corner of Spring Garden and North Seventh Streets.

[642] Col. John J. Du Solle, editor of *Noah's New York Sunday Times,* to Mrs. Weiss. See her *Home Life of Poe,* page 99. Du Solle was, for a long time, a Philadelphia newspaper man and editor there of the *Spirit of the Times.* See illustration, page 438.

Even the published work of this Spring, which was, of course, written some time before it appeared, reflects the exigencies of the period. The attempt to gain an English publishing contact through the influence of Dickens having failed,[602] Poe now took up the work of an obscure British playwright by the name of R. H. Horne, and in the March issue of *Graham's* gave his cabinet play *Orion* a tremendous puff, saying that, in some respects, it surpassed Milton. Some correspondence then passed between the astonished but delighted Englishman and his American reviewer, in which Poe sought to have his favors returned by endeavoring to use Horne to arrange for a London edition of the *Tales*. This also came to nothing, although Horne evidently tried.

The rest of the literary output that came to print now was for the most part retrospective or contemplative, *The Elk,* already mentioned, and a strong return to the past in *A Tale of the Ragged Mountains,* published in *Godey's Lady's Book* for April, 1844. This story harked back to school days at the University of Virginia. In the beautiful mountains where he had walked in 1826, dreaming of Elmira Royster, he now took refuge again in vivid imagination from a sea of troubles.[643]

Diddling, considered as one of the Exact Sciences, which later appeared in the *Broadway Journal,* is a grotesque essay on the various dodges of cheats; how to get something for nothing, dishonestly but cleverly. This is one of the most elaborate of Poe's attempts to be humorous. Evidently Poe derived considerable amusement from the distress and surprise of those despoiled. The petty crooks and scoundrels of the story are the heroes, and the laugh is supposed to come when the victim discovers his loss. There is a curious parallel between this effusion and Poe's own childish and almost unbalanced delight in a hoax of any kind. For those who wish a sidelight on a curious ramification of the man's character, *Diddling, considered as one of the Exact Sciences* supplies the text. Poe used tobacco, like most of the male population, juvenile and adult, in the '40s, and was often hard put to it in his dire poverty at times to secure a plug of even so humble a sedative. In *Diddling* we are told how one may secure a plug for nothing by confusing a stupid shopkeeper about the change. A year later a shopkeeper in New York tells us how Poe came into his shop after looking into the window wistfully for some time.[644] " In a moment he entered and asked the price of tobacco. When I had told him he made no move to buy, and after a few general remarks started to leave. . . . So I offered the man a piece of tobacco. He accepted, thanked me and departed." In the story the clever hero confuses the shopkeeper by his superior ways and secures the tobacco as a prize. Mr. Poe was too honest to actually do that. It was beneath the dignity of a gentleman, but in his imagination he reveled in gulling the poor tradesmen whose wares he needed, but whose calling he despised. In the story Poe takes revenge, imaginatively, not only upon tobacco merchants, but upon furniture dealers, boarding-house keepers, and clerks. There is no doubt that, at the time the story was written, their importunities and even kindnesses must have been more than usually annoying to the poverty-stricken but always clever and proud Mr. Poe.

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[643] See this chapter, page 529. Also note 602.

At the beginning of April, 1844, Poe seems rather suddenly to have decided to leave Philadelphia to try to break ground anew in New York. His life in Philadelphia had become, for him, a nightmare of physical suffering and mental and spiritual confusion. Whispers and scandals about his drinking, the destitution of his family, and the Saratoga Lady already began to lay the basis of a sense of persecution, to which his abnormally sensitive nature made him prone. All his former openings were closed, and it was also probably psychically important to change the scene to a place where every aspect, and chance acquaintances met on the street did not evoke some ramification of the memories of failure. He had no particular plan in mind, and knew neither what he would do nor where he would live. A vague hope, again to persuade his friend, Professor Anthon, to induce Harpers to publish his collected tales, was the only shred of plan in his mind. Mrs. Clemm was left to dispose of the miserable remnant of his effects and affairs. A few friends remembered, and cherished the cuttings from the garden which she and Virginia now gave them. The landlady afterward told of some carpets and plain painted chairs that she reluctantly claimed for the long arrears of rent. After Poe's departure Mrs. Clemm sold off his little library to William A. Leary, a neighboring bookseller on North Seventh Street.[645] There was not enough money to take her to New York, and she was left alone with her memories, her forebodings, and the cat. Catarina, having no marketable value, alone remained. She was a large tortoise shell, beloved by Virginia, and the pet of a childless house.

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[644] In 1844, Gabriel Harrison, an actor-politician, kept a store at Broadway and Prince Street, New York City. Poe used to loaf at this corner-shop and the description is taken from Mr. Harrison's *Reminiscences*. These appeared in the *New York Times* in March, 1899.

That *Diddling* was written in Philadelphia, appears from the fact that Poe mentions it in a letter, Poe to Lowell, New York, May 28, 1844.

Taking Virginia with him, — "Sissy coughed none at all," — with only $11 in his pocket, Poe left Philadelphia in the early Spring morning. The train via the Perth Amboy route left at six o'clock A.M., but, on the morning of April 6, 1844, it was almost an hour late.[646] After some dispute with the driver over the baggage fee, Poe took Virginia over to the *Depot Hotel* while he read the morning newspapers contemptuously and waited. It was near the Walnut Street wharf, and the streets were alive with the early morning venders and their cries.

De hominy man am on his way
From de navy yahd
Wid his hominy

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[645] See the *Poe-Duane Letters*. Endorsement by William Duane, once Secretary of the Treasury, on Poe's letter to him from New York, January 28, 1845, relative to borrowed copies of the *Southern Literary Messenger* which "was sold by the said Poe among a lot of books belonging to himself to William A. Leary, a bookseller on North Seventh Street. . . ." This bookseller would have been not far from the Poe cottage on the same street. See also Chapter XXII, page 585, for a full discussion of the "Poe-Duane Controversy" over the matter. Poe's postscript to Mrs. Clemm, April 7, 1844, shows that Mrs. Clemm knew about the books.

[646] The statements in this description are literally exact. From Poe's letter to Mrs. Clemm next day (April 7, 1844), from contemporary descriptions of the locality of the railroad station, prints, and from Table No. 16, of *The Traveler's Guide, A Map of the Railroads, Roads, Canals, and Steamboat Routes of the United States*, by H. S. Tanner, Philadelphia, Oberholtzer's *Literary History of Philadelphia*, etc., etc.

Or the more alluring chant over a little brazier trundled on wheels —

Pepper-pot!
All hot, all hot!
Makee back strong
Makee live long
Come buy pepper pot . . .

About seven o'clock a small locomotive with a huge diamond-shaped smoke-stack and a large brass bell puffed and clanged its way out of town, the pale face of Virginia looking out of one of the car windows, framed, like the proscenium of a toy stage, with little red-plush curtains. Doubtless the gallant Mr. Poe had secured for " Sissy " a seat, nearby, but not too close to the stove. The roar of the drays on the cobbles of the Philadelphia water front died away. As the train gathered speed, Poe may well have clutched his " Spanish looking cloak " closer about him and shivered. For him, Philadelphia had become the City of Dreadful Night. They changed at Perth Amboy to the steamer, and arrived late that afternoon in New York in the midst of a downpour. The next morning, Poe wrote to Mrs. Clemm after breakfast.

CHAPTER XXII

The Raven and His Shadow

New York, Sunday Morning,
April 7, (1844), just after breakfast

My Dear Muddy, — We have just this minute done breakfast, and I now sit down to write you about everything. I can't pay for the letter, because the P. O. won't be open to-day. In the first place we arrived safe at Walnut St. wharf. The driver wanted to make me pay a dollar, but I wouldn't. Then I had to pay a boy a levy to put the trunks in the baggage car. In the meantime I took Sis in the *Depot Hotel.* It was only a quarter past six, and we had to wait till seven. We saw the *Ledger* and *Times* — nothing in either — a few words of no account in the *Chronicle*. We started in good spirits, but did not get here until nearly three o'clock. We went in the cars to Amboy, about forty miles from N. York, and then took the steamboat the rest of the way. Sissy coughed none at all. When we got to the wharf [*New York*] it was raining hard. I left her on board the boat, after putting the trunks in the Ladies' cabin, and set off to buy an umbrella and look for a boarding-house. I met a man selling umbrellas, and bought one for twenty-five cents.[647] Then I went up Greenwich St. and soon found a boarding-house. It is just before you get to Cedar St., on the west side going up — the left-hand side. It has brown stone steps, with a porch with brown pillars. 'Morrison' is the name on the door.[648] I made a bargain in a few minutes and then got a hack and went for Sis. I was not gone more than half an hour, and she was quite astonished to see me back so soon. She didn't expect me for an hour. There were two other ladies waiting on board — so she wasn't very lonely. When we got to the house we had to wait about half an hour before the room was ready. The house is old and looks buggy [*letter cut here by a signature vandal*] . . . the cheapest board I ever knew, taking into consideration the central situation and the living. I wish Kate[649] could see it — she would faint. Last night, for supper, we had the nicest tea you ever drank, strong and hot, — wheat bread and rye bread — cheese — tea-cakes (elegant), a great dish (two dishes) of elegant ham, and two of cold veal, piled up like a mountain and large slices — three dishes of the cakes and everything in the greatest profusion. No fear of starving here. The landlady seemed as if she couldn't press us enough, and we were at home directly. Her husband is living with her — a fat, good-natured old soul. There are eight or ten boarders — two or three of them ladies — two servants. For breakfast we had excellent-flavoured coffee, hot and strong — not very clear and no great deal of cream — veal cutlets, elegant ham and eggs and nice bread and butter. I never sat down to a more plentiful or a nicer breakfast. I wish you could have seen the eggs — and the great dishes of meat. I ate the first hearty breakfast I have eaten since I left our little home. Sis is delighted, and we are both in excellent spirits. She has coughed hardly any and had no night sweat. She is now busy mending my pants which I tore against a nail. I went out last night and bought a skein of silk, a skein of thread, two buttons, a pair of slippers, and a pan for the stove.[650] The fire kept in all night. We have now got four dollars and a half left. To-morrow I am going to try and borrow three dollars, so that I may have a fortnight to go upon. I feel in excellent spirits, and haven't drank a drop — so that I hope soon to get out of trouble. The very instant I scrape together enough money I will send it on. You can't imagine how much we both do miss you. Sissy had a hearty cry last night because you and Catterina weren't here.[649] We are resolved to get two rooms the first moment we can. In the meantime it is impossible we could be more comfortable or more at home than we are. It looks as if it were going to clear up now. Be sure and go to the P. O. and have my letters forwarded. As soon as I write Lowell's article, I will send it to you, and get you to get the money from Graham. Give our best love to C.[649]

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[647] It should be remembered that the purchasing power of money at this date was about four times what it is now. In any sum mentioned, in connection with the times portrayed here, this basis of comparison must be borne in mind.

[648] Poe evidently gives explicit directions here to enable Mrs. Clemm to find the house when she herself arrived later on.

[649] A reference to "Catarina," the Poes' pet cat.

(Signature cut away)

(P. S.) Be sure and take home the *Messenger* to Hirst. We hope to send for you very soon.

This is notable, in Poe's correspondence, as being the only one of his letters on record in which the mask is entirely dropped. All the rest seem to have been written under some strong emotion, for a set purpose, or wrapped in the ample folds of his literary and critical cloak. Here for about one brief hour — about nine o'clock on a rainy Sunday morning in April, 1844, — we see "Israfel," the hollow-eyed, cloak-wrapped figure with the ravens circling about his head, the man of gloomy destiny, the cabalistic seer, the mighty reasoner, the haunter of graves — stripped of all this legendary make-up — stripped even of his trousers, sitting up in bed, full of "elegant ham," writing "Muddie" a real honest letter about this workaday world. Virginia is sitting near the stove while the rain patters on the roof, — "She is now busy mending my pants which I tore against a nail," snuffling a little bit now and then because she misses her "Muddy," and her pussy cat away off there in Philadelphia. For sheer personal insight into the personal habits of the human animal known as Edgar Allan Poe, this letter is worth a whole barrel of confectionery to Helen Whitman, and the philosophy meant for Lowell or Chivers.

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[650] Spools did not come into general use until the late '60s.

There seem to have been only two persons, in this life, in whom Poe ever fully confided. One of those was his foster-mother Frances Allan — ("if only *she* hadn't died!")[380] — and the other was his aunt, Maria Clemm. She knew him as a human being, body and soul. That the intellect, the world of his imagination was utterly beyond her, makes Poe's letters to her, and this one in particular, all the more important as a sheer literal record of physical fact. The facts which emerge from it are not at all mysterious. They are, indeed, immemorially familiar to humanity; poverty, drink, tuberculosis, domestic love, and brave, useless hope.

Whole flocks of dove-like persons have cooed rapturously over this lone epistle for well-nigh two generations. The cat, of course, *is* very fetching; quite smoothable in fact. Taken out of its frame of surrounding facts, and read as a lonely item, this letter, as Mrs. Hale says, "is a subject upon which we could lucubrate indefinitely." Once returned to that frame, however, it is merely a very intimate and unique confirmation, from Poe's own hand, of what went before, and what came after. As such it is deserving of more than sentimental attention.

The nervous poverty of one whose only stock in trade is dreams, runs in every line. There is the familiar argument with the cab driver over the customary fare, the little penny pan purchased to make the landlady's coal last all night, the mended clothes, the " elegant " board in the house that looks buggy — at nothing a week — three dollars to be borrowed plus four dollars and a half left, " so that I may have a fortnight to go upon "! Let those who can rhapsodize do so. Rhapsody should be made of softer stuff.

The man who wrote this letter had recently been starving. His descriptions of food read like the enthusiasm of a diet patient for his favorite café. Then there is the shadow of invalidism, the unusual absence of Sis's cough and night sweats, she who is called only by the name of sister. All this is carefully detailed to Mrs. Clemm, waiting in some boarding-house in Philadelphia until Eddie could raise the $3 fare by way of Perth Amboy ($1 less than by the Trenton line). Things had come to a desperate pass, indeed, when the mainstay of the family had been left behind with the cat. Scarcely one item is wanting to complete the picture. Mr. Poe, snorting over the worthless Philadelphia papers, " a few words of no account," even as he left the town where he was no longer an editor, and then — " I feel in excellent spirits, and haven't drank a drop — *so that I hope soon to get out of trouble."* Evidently Mrs. Clemm knew what the cause of trouble was. Even over the postscript to this pathetic letter, so determinedly cheerful, to encourage poor, lonely " Muddie," an angry controversy arose.

Poe,[651] it will be remembered, had written to Snodgrass some years before to obtain bound volumes of the numbers of the *Messenger* he had edited. Snodgrass could not get them, it seems, and, through Hirst, Poe had borrowed a copy belonging to William Duane, at one time Secretary of the Treasury. This is why Poe writes to Mrs. Clemm, " Be sure and take home the *Messenger* to Hirst." Mrs. Clemm had already inadvertently pawned the book with others, but was, it seems, afraid to tell this to Poe. She informed him that she had left it at Hirst's office with his brother. Duane then wrote Poe asking for the volume and Poe told him what Mrs. Clemm had said. In the meantime Hirst had fallen out with Poe and, Duane wrote him, "the statement was pronounced by Mr. Hirst to be a damned lie." Subsequent events showed that Mr. Hirst was right in denying having received the volume — "Mr. Poe having sold the books — I hope unintentionally." Further angry correspondence between the three now thoroughly angry parties to the controversy followed. Hirst went about Philadelphia saying that Poe had stolen the book and pawned it. Duane made a considerable pother over it and (after receiving a characteristic letter from Poe in which he was told to "Settle your difficulties with Hirst, and insult me with no more of your communications"), finally found the book in a second hand store in Richmond, Virginia, thus confirming him in his suspicions of Poe. During all this fire-spitting, Mrs. Clemm was the only one who knew. The incident is only important as being typical of many similar minor difficulties and accusations that followed Poe. Here were two gentlemen, one a close friend, and the other an acquaintance, suddenly calling Poe liar and thief, when he had gone to considerable pains to be punctilious. It was all very bewildering, only to be set down to the pure devilishness of human nature. That must be it! "Insult me no more," Poe writes Mr. Duane, who doubtless paid three cents to get the letter. "Bombastes Furioso Poe," endorses Duane upon it. "Liar," shrieks Hirst. Mr. Griswold and Mr. English chuckle. The tale makes its sorry rounds, while Mrs. Clemm sticks to her story.[652]

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[651] The petty incidents of the Poe-Duane controversy are detailed here, not for their inherent importance, but because this incident furnishes a type of the many small misunderstandings which served to estrange Poe from his contemporaries. The difficulties of a detached mind in conflict with a practical world are, here, implicit. Other similar incidents have been deliberately left out as being brakes on the wheel of narrative, and this may be regarded as a symbol of the rest. The incident has been pieced together from the correspondence between Poe and Duane, and Duane and Hirst. Mrs. Clemm's position is easily inferred, quite human and natural. This incident may have *caused* the estrangement with Hirst.

The boarding-house at which Poe and Virginia found themselves in New York was located at 130 Greenwich Street.[653] The funds for remaining there, and for bringing Mrs. Clemm on from

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[652] Mr. J. H. Whitty says that Poe used the Duane volume of the *Messenger* to prepare his *Tales* in 1840, and that he (Whitty) found the identical volume a few years ago in a Boston second-hand bookshop. See *Complete Poems,* J. H. Whitty, *Memoir,* page xlviii, large edition.

[653] The street number is taken from addresses on letters forwarded to Poe at this time.

Philadelphia, seem to have been provided by the perpetration of one of those elaborate literary jokes in which Poe so delighted. During the first weeks in which he was in New York, Poe must have called on the editor of the *Sun* and sold him the manuscript of *The Balloon Hoax,* for, on the Saturday following his arrival, the regular morning issue of the paper for April 13 contained an apparently hastily inserted announcement in double leads that the news of a balloon's having crossed the Atlantic had just been received, and that an extra giving full particulars would be issued at ten o'clock the same morning. The promised extra, which appeared at the promised hour, contained Poe's story printed as if it were a " scoop " by the *Sun*.[654] The clever, and " imaginative realism " of Poe's style was successful in temporarily cozening the multitude who read, gaped, and believed. Many a beaver hat or poke bonnet waggled with astonishment over the —

ASTOUNDING
NEWS!
BY EXPRESS VIA NORFOLK!
THE
ATLANTIC CROSSED
in
THREE DAYS!

Signal Triumph
of
Mr. Monck Mason's
FLYING
MACHINE!!!!

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[654] The *New York Sun,* which was the first penny newspaper in New York, would naturally have been chosen by Poe for this hoax. The paper was even then going in for a peculiarly American and, in some respects, sensational method of treating news which it may be said to have inaugurated, as a feature of the new, native journalism.

Arrival at Sullivan's Island
near Charleston, S. C.,
of Mr. Mason, Mr. Robert
Holland, Mr. Henson, Mr.
Harrison Ainsworth, and
four others, in the Steering Balloon "Victoria" —
After a passage of
Seventy-Five Hours
From Land to Land [655]

The beach at Sullivan's Island near Fort Moultrie, which seems to have left an undying impression upon Poe's mind, had again been returned to in *The Balloon Hoax,* as in *The Gold Bug,* to lend authentic local color.[290] The journalism of the time, when news still depended upon the uncertain arrival of sailing ships, travelers' tales, and the timely letters of special correspondents, lent itself occasionally to hoaxing the public on a large scale, without the fear of contradiction by telegraph, which would now follow instantly. Wonders were in the air, and Mr. Poe's story was unusually clever, interesting, and circumstantial. As a matter of fact he had only anticipated the news by about a century. Strangely enough, the report in the New York papers of the first transatlantic balloon journey recorded almost the same number of hours and many of the same incidents found in Mr. Monck Mason's hypothetical log. From the author's standpoint, it was an excellent way to circulate a short story. It created a thundering lot of talk.

But there was something more than that. Mr. Poe's peculiar joy at having sold his fellow mortals was much deeper than his satisfaction at having sold a manuscript, even though the reward was never so welcome. To have taken in many, justified him in that contempt for the mob which several of his other essays and stories exhibit to a marked degree, while it pandered to his own self-esteem. It was incense to that legend of the mob's inferiority, which the very weaknesses of his nature demanded. To keep the air clouded with this fragrant smoke was necessary, so that he, and the world he gazed upon, might appear through the haze other than they actually were. Lastly, it tickled his own curious sense of humor, so closely involved with his essential vanity. Remembering the headless goose at West Point that was made to pass for a gory human head, and the advertisement of himself as the master of mysterious cryptograms, one cannot help but recognize some of the features of " Count " Cagliostro.[377]

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[655] Of these headlines, Poe, in a later edition of the collected *Tales,* says:

"The subjoined *jeu d'esprit* with the preceding heading in magnificent capitals, well interspersed with notes of admiration, was originally published, as matter of fact, in the *New York Sun,* a daily newspaper, and therein fully subserved the purpose of creating indigestible aliment for the *quidnuncs* during the few hours intervening between a couple of the Charleston mails. The rush for the 'sole paper which had the news,' was something beyond even the prodigious; and, in fact, if (as some assert) the 'Victoria' *did* not absolutely accomplish the voyage recorded, it will be difficult to assign a reason why she *should* not have accomplished it."

The perpetrator of the hoax was, of course, sooner or later tracked to his lair at 130 Greenwich Street, where the immediate result of the sale of the manuscript had been an enlarged apartment. Poe and Virginia now occupied two rooms. Mrs. Clemm was sent for, and seems to have arrived a week or so after her family, doubtless with tears of joy in her eyes, and a basket containing " Catarina." The literary town was soon aware that Mr. Poe was in its midst, but his position was an anomalous one.

He had now been editor of three important publications, but both his literary and personal excesses and peculiarities were known. If he was admired, he was also feared. There were few niches into which he would fit. Editors' chairs are neither easily vacated, nor readily filled, and there can be no doubt that Poe was very averse to filling any subordinate position. Neither his personality nor his inclinations fitted him for that. As always, since the days on the *Messenger,* the ambitious ghost of the great national magazine was at his elbow as one of the directing forces of his literary career. The wraith of this ambition, always about to become embodied, walked with him to the very last.[644]

During the first few months of his second sojourn in New York, Poe existed mainly on the meager returns from hack work of one kind or another. It is probable that his tale of *The Oblong Box,* which appeared in *Godey's Lady's Book* for September, 1844, was finished at 130 Greenwich Street, as its preoccupation with the scenes about Charleston Harbor connect it with the same locality mentioned in *The Balloon Hoax* of a few weeks before. *Dreamland* appeared in *Graham's* for June, 1844. In *The Balloon Hoax,* Poe had rested on the more popular, and more cheerfully realistic method of *The Gold Bug* which, he found, was by far the most popular of his stories. From now on, however, he returned for the most part to the ideal world created by his imagination. *The Oblong Box* was, of course, a coffin. Corpses, premature burials, and those unique and haunted landscapes of his poems, show the strange paths that he took in his dreams, and the melancholy comfort which he found in the realms of the imagination alone. Physically Poe had come from Philadelphia to New York, actually he had arrived —

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an *Eidolon,* named Night,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have reached these lands but newly
From an ultimate dim Thule —
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
Out of Space — out of Time.[656]

This poem may be said to mark the beginning of another resurgence of creative poetical activity that lasted with some blank interludes from the Spring of 1844 to the early part of 1849. This, the last flowering of his creative harvest, was notable for the production of his greatest poetry. *Dreamland, The Raven, Ulalume, The Bells,* the greatly improved *Valley of Unrest, Eldorado,* and *Annabel Lee,* besides some minor things, seem to have followed each other in fairly rapid succession. On the other hand, the prose shows a distinct falling off in the shaping power of imagination, and the criticism, a tendency to degenerate into hack work, or vicious personal attacks alternating with perfervid puffing.[657] From now on, for the most part, in his criticism,

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[656] The first stanza of Poe's *Dreamland.*

[657] An exception to this statement about the prose of this period must be made in favor of the charming landscape sketches of the latter years: *Landor's Cottage, The Domain of Arnheim,* etc.

Poe seems to have been unable to dissociate himself from the purely personal, in his attitude towards his contemporaries, and anger, jealousy, irritation, or affection colored most of his reviews.

A survey of Poe's literary works from the end of the Philadelphia period to his final disappearance in 1849, shows that it bears indubitably the marks of his own psychic and physical fluctuations. The excesses of the last two years in Philadelphia, combined with what was probably the ordained and inherited tendency of his life curve to take a downward direction early in life, had left him more than ever nervously disorganized, and confirmed his tendency to turn inward even more than before. Hence, he was unequal to the more sustained effort necessary for creative prose, which now, for the most part, with the exception of a few landscape sketches, took on the guise of journalistic comment or correspondence, and we find him, after a period of more than a decade, now turning once more to poetry, which was at once the expression of the troubles of his inner life and a confession of his almost total withdrawal from any vital contact with the objective world. His consciousness, indeed, during the last five years of his life, seems to have busied itself almost entirely with the problems of self. That the painful events which went on about him in the outside world, during the last years of his life, helped to confirm him in this tendency to psychic withdrawal, there can be no doubt. Over some of these events he had no control. But it is also true that the progressive disorganization, which went on within, produced for him a corresponding chaos in the world without, so that a vicious circle was formed that tightened about him like a noose. One of the accompanying phenomena of this latter period, which must ever be borne in mind as its events are detailed, a psychic phenomenon which largely explains many of the events themselves, was a growing and accelerated tendency to an exaltation of the ego. By 1848, with the appearance of *Eureka,* this tendency had already passed the last admitted borders of sanity.

The tendency to this lamentable condition can be traced far back into his youth. Once given Poe's peculiar nervous constitution and the events which overtook him, and it seems hard to admit of any other outcome. Richmond, and the home life there, had driven him in upon himself. By the time he went to the University of Virginia, he was already a pompous youth possessed of a tremendous, certainly an eccentric, desire for fame. Literature had been his method of approach to the ideal, and had necessitated a constant introspection and years of brooding, that had inevitably set him apart. His open and avowed profession of the name of poet had, at once, sequestered him and exalted him to a strange degree. The profession of literature had involved poverty. This, in turn, had thrust upon him an incidental feeling of inferiority that he had offset by a correspondingly exalted pride. The very time and places in which he found himself, an age and country which could not understand the motives of an æsthetic life, thrust upon him almost inevitably the necessity of exalting himself in his own eyes, to defend himself from the opinions of a world that regarded objective attainments and possessions as the only criteria of human success. All these were pertinent and tremendously significant factors in the progress and catastrophe of Edgar Allan Poe. Whether these, however, in themselves would have been sufficient to produce a completely abnormal result may well be doubted.

To all of these factors had been added another, which undoubtedly served to enlarge the already exalted ego of Mr. Poe clear out of the realm of the eccentric into the uncertain shadows of the insane. This was his use of opium. To what degree he indulged in this, and at just what intervals, it is impossible accurately to detail. "The poison, which taken alternately with opium, kept him half his days in madness," is certainly an exaggeration.[658] That such a statement could be made at all by one who knew him intimately is nevertheless peculiarly significant. It is in the obvious results upon him, however, that the main evidence exists. The end of that man, who indulges in opium, is frequently an intense exaltation of the ego. In describing this effect, with which he was peculiarly familiar, Baudelaire, who admired, and rapturously recognized in Poe the records of the effects of opium, goes on to say:

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[658] William Wallace, in a reply to John Neal's sketch, after Poe's death. See a discussion of this in Woodberry, 1919, vol. II, notes, page 429. English, who saw much of Poe in New York in 1845–46, says he saw "no sign of it," *i.e.*, the opium habit. Rosalie Poe, on a visit to Fordham in 1846, tells of Poe's demanding morphine, however, and Sartain tells of Poe's begging for drugs in Philadelphia in 1849.

> Finally, the drugged man admires himself inordinately; he condemns himself, he glorifies himself; he realizes his condemnation; he becomes the centre of the universe, certain of his virtue as of his genius. Then in a stupendous irony he cries: *Je suis devenu Dieu!* One instant after, he projects himself out of himself, as if the will of an intoxicated man had an efficacious virtue, and cries, with a cry that might strike down the scattered angels from the ways of the sky: *Je suis un Dieu!* "[659]

Now this is so precise and perfect a description of Poe's state of mind, particularly during the last years of his life, that, if it cannot be at least partly traced to the same cause, it is one of the most remarkable coincidences of effects on record. For Poe not only struck down the scattered angels when he seized the harp of Israfel, but he also, as many people testify, frequently thought of himself as damned. At the same time, he regarded himself as an epitome of genius. In the pages of *Eureka* he follows precisely the course of the drug addict as described in the last sentence just quoted from Baudelaire. He finds that he is becoming God, for his exalted intelligence (ego) has, he thinks, permitted him to penetrate the secret of the universe. " One instant after he projects himself out of himself . . . and cries, ' Eureka,' — what does the word mean but that ' I have found.' " What he " found " was the secret of the universe. To find the secret of all things implies one's equality with God.

The final result of this growing tendency of Poe, to the final condition of an ego expounded to the *n*th power, has been delineated here somewhat out of the order of the time of its complete inflation, because it is imperative to bear it in mind, in order to understand the chronicle of the last years, which must now follow. Why the " godlike " soul of this man was so much irritated by the petty doings of many mortal men and women, the nature of the well-spring from which his poetry took its source, his alternating fits of despair and exaltation, and the nature of the tragedies which now rapidly overwhelmed him, — will, in the light of his psychic condition, undoubtedly become less mysterious.

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[659] *Baudelaire, A Study*, by Arthur Symons, pages 72–73.

In the Spring of 1844, Poe was writing a biographical sketch of James Russell Lowell which was highly laudatory, especially of his poetry which Poe genuinely admired. Lowell was also writing Poe's biography, a much more solid piece of criticism, which contained some excellent remarks on the contemporary conditions of American letters. The sketch appeared with a rather poor portrait of Poe painted (*sic*) by A. C. Smith and engraved by Welch and Walter among "Our Contributors" in *Graham's* for February, 1845.

There was considerable friendly correspondence between the two friends upon their mutual labors in behalf of each other, about this time. Lowell's final opinion of Poe may be summed up roughly in the statement that he admired Poe's work as an imaginative artist, but shied at its abnormal implications; the better part of Poe's criticism Lowell held in high esteem while deprecating its animosity. The man himself he admired circumspectly, and pitied charitably. The comment of this generous and understanding man, probably the greatest contemporary with whom Poe had vital contact, constitutes an important judgment.

In a letter written to Lowell in May, 1844, enclosing data for his biography, Poe includes a list of six unpublished stories which were, he says, then in the hands of editors.[660] These tales, no doubt, represented the latter fruits of his labors during the Philadelphia period. The long delays to which he was subjected, not only before publishing, but before payment, are here made painfully clear and exhibit vividly an exasperating cause of his poverty.[661]

Since the early 1830's, Poe had been writing steadily and professionally. During that time he had produced both prose and poetry which even his detractors admitted to be of extraordinary quality. It was certainly as good as, if not better than any other imaginative literature then being produced in the United States. Yet he was not only poorly rewarded; he was still in abject poverty. His reputation had been literally his only gain rolled up by the years. Even this, in some quarters, was doubtful. His collected works had been given away to be sold without royalty, and, even then, they had not been successful in achieving circulation. Despite his not infrequent lapses, due to constitutional ill-health and other causes, it must be remembered that Poe had worked desperately hard at his profession. The mere bulk of his work is conclusive evidence of this.[662] Hundreds of columns of reviews, editorials, and notes; a sufficient number of stories to make up five "ordinary novel volumes"; three books of poems, the editorship of three periodicals, and the conduct of an exacting and always active correspondence in the laborious medium of longhand — had barely sufficed to keep the wolf from the door, and had dumped Poe a derelict in New York in April, 1844, with $4.50 in his pockets.

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[660] Poe to Lowell, New York, May 20, 1844. The unpublished stories were: *The Oblong Box, The Premature Burial, The Purloined Letter, The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether, Mesmeric Revelation, Thou Art the Man.*

[661] Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, pages 71–72, gives an excellent discussion of this matter, together with the full text of the correspondence with Lowell and Anthon about this time.

It is preposterous to suppose that this was "all his own fault." To do so leaves out of account the very practical consideration that the main cause of Mr. Poe's poverty was that he was underpaid. Only the lower order of his literary labors, his journalism, had any marketable value. For his great art, the condition of taste, the copyright law, and the flood of English books that annually glutted the American market, left scarcely a purchaser. He could not, in fact, even successfully give away his stories or poems, when they were bound in book form. In this, he was groping against the wall which confronted everyone who wrote imaginatively in English on the western side of the Atlantic.

It was due to this condition that Poe continued, from 1835 to 1845, to make continued and vain efforts to reap even a harvest of reputation from a successful circulation of his collected tales. Upon his removal to New York, he now once more addressed himself to the matter, and again turned to a former acquaintance. Professor Charles Anthon was to solicit, in Poe's interest, with Harpers, for whom Anthon was a literary adviser, in order to get them to bring out an edition comprising the collected stories to date. In a passage in a letter to Anthon the vicissitudes of Poe's literary career, which may be taken as typical of those of many another American author of the day, are made sufficiently clear:

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[662] See Poe to Prof. Charles Anthon, June, 1844.

> Holding steadily in view my ultimate purpose, — to found a Magazine of my own, or (one) in which at least I might have a proprietary right, — it has been my constant endeavor in the mean time, not so much to establish a reputation great in itself as one of that particular character which should best further my special objects, and draw attention to my exertions as Editor of a Magazine. Thus I have written no books, and have been so far essentially a Magazinist (defective MS.) bearing, not only willingly but cheerfully, sad poverty and the consequent contumelies and other ills which the condition of the mere Magazinist entails upon him in America, where, more than in any other region upon the face of the globe, to be poor is to be despised.
>
> The one great difficulty resulting from this course is unless the journalist collects his various articles he is liable to be grossly misconceived and misjudged by men of whose good opinion he would be proud, but who see, perhaps, only a paper here and there, by accident — often only one of his mere extravaganzas, written to supply a particular demand. He loses, too, whatever merit may be his due on the score of versatility — a point which can only be estimated by collection of his various articles in volume form and all together. This is indeed a serious difficulty — to seek a remedy for which is my object in writing you this letter.[662]

The remedy, of course, was the proposed edition of collected tales which Poe says, " are in number sixty-six. They would make, perhaps, five of the ordinary novel-volumes." Due to the fact that Professor Anthon seems to have been on his summer vacation, he did not answer Poe's letter until five months later. The tenor of his reply was entirely cordial. He had proposed the matter to Harpers, who, while they admitted Poe's reputation and the quality of his work, apparently refused to undertake publication for him on account of his connection with the textbook on conchology in Philadelphia, in 1839, a publication of a rival firm to which Poe had lent his name, and that had been designed to drive a similar book, under the Harper copyright, off the market. As Harpers had previously published *Arthur Gordon Pym* for Poe, their " complaints " were not without some basis.

"The Harpers also entertain, as I heard from their own lips, the highest opinion of your talents, but —"[663] Poe had the option of calling upon the Harpers to make explanations, but it is doubtful if he did so. The project in that direction was permitted to languish.

With the arrival of Mrs. Clemm in New York, sometime during the Spring of 1844, the two rooms at 130 Greenwich Street were given up completely to Virginia and her mother, while Poe himself took up quarters with a Mrs. William (*sic*) Foster at Number 4 Ann Street. Here he seems to have shared bachelor quarters with C. C. Curtis, and to have led a more or less poverty-stricken and haphazard existence, not without certain Bohemian interludes. In the cellar of one Sandy Welsh, who kept a tavern on Ann Street, during the Spring of 1844 Poe met a number of congenial spirits, journalists and others, and read *The Raven* to them, stanza by stanza, in the form in which it then existed. The poem was criticized by those present, sometimes in a humorous mood, and suggestions, some of which Poe is said to have adopted, were offered. Specific instances have been given of the emendations thus said to have been made by others, but the matter is extremely nebulous at best.[664]

The rest of Poe's time seems to have been largely occupied with making the rounds of the newspapers, and supplying out-of-town correspondents with light comments, items of news, and other literary comment. It is probable that, in slack periods, he resorted to this type of writing more than is generally suspected, and that all of these minor effusions have not been traced. On June 18, he wrote for the editors of the *Columbia Spy* at Columbia, Pennsylvania:

New York Harbor in June, 1844

By *Edgar A. Poe*

In point of *natural* beauty, as well as of convenience, the harbor of New York has scarcely its equal in the northern hemisphere; but, as in the case of Brooklyn, the Gothamites have most generously disfigured it by displays of landscapes and architectural taste. More atrocious *pagodas,* or what not, for it is indeed difficult to find a name for them, — were certainly never imagined than the greater portion of those which affront the eye, in every nook and corner of the bay, and more particularly, in the vicinity of New Brighton. If these monstrosities appertain to taste, then it is taste in its dying agonies. . . .

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[663] Anthon to Poe, New York, November 2, 1844.

[664] See Woodberry, 1901, page 114, note 1. *The Raven* was claimed to have been "submitted by Poe piecemeal to the criticism . . . of his intimates (at Welsh's) until it was voted complete." This is, of course, fancy run wild (Woodberry merely notes the claim). See *Scribner's* for October, 1875, F. G. Fairchild.

How completely the world had changed since Poe had seen the same harbor on his way home from West Point in 1831, and how little he relished the change, can be seen in this sketch.[665] Poe's taste was, as was inevitable, affected by the standards of before the Mexican War days, but that, in the main, it rose above the monstrosities of the time, and looked back to the Georgian architecture and costumes of his early Richmond and English school days with regret, is vastly to his credit. For the little boy who played about Frances Allan's charming drawing-room on Russell Square, London, in 1818, the " pagodas " of New Brighton were not to be swallowed without gasping.[666]

An amusing subject for a social essay on early Nineteenth Century America would be a comparison of the prevailing types of architecture with the current types of foreign novels, in which was imported not only thought, but taste. Classic, Gothic, Mooresque, and Victorian seems to have been the order of obsession, roughly speaking, in both books and buildings. On the seaboard, the trade with the Orient had strange esoteric manifestations.

As the classical culture and the imported renaissance patterns of the Eighteenth Century Colonial, and the later Georgian went out of style, there was a brief but determined attempt to follow the political conception of the " fathers " and make America, in outward appearance, the reflection of the classical republic of which such statesmen as Jefferson dreamed — hence " Thy groves and templed hills," embalmed in the national hymn. This tendency continued to haunt the South. A little later, there was a restless desire to become Gothic which " almost succeeded." In the '40s a great many people had settled upon being Mooresque or even Oriental, hence, as Poe says, the " pagodas."

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[665] For the contrast implied see Chapter XIV, pages 301–318.

[666] For the reasons for Poe's choice of the word " pagodas " to describe architectural houses see the illustration, page 460.

Into a country that had a weak cultural digestive tract was poured a plethora of ideas that gorged it intellectually and artistically, with the result of astounding regurgitations in literature and architecture. The terrible speed of the first machine era had, in the United States and elsewhere, already broken away from all the former bounds of taste, and progress swooped drunkenly forward. American architecture had started upon the orgy of ugliness which culminated in the delirium tremens epoch of the Centennial.

> . . . a collection of tags, thrown at random against a building. Architectural forms . . . brought together by a mere juxtaposition of materials held in place by neither imagination nor logic. . . .[667]

As a symbol of the complete æsthetic anarchy, and the barbarous romanticism of the era, one may take Colonel Colt's mansion near Hartford, Connecticut. It was called Armsmear, and it was described as late as 1876 in the *Art Journal,* as a " characteristic type of the unique." [667]

> Armsmear was a long, grand, impressive, contradictory, beautiful strange thing. . . . An Italian villa in stone, massive, noble, refined, yet not carrying out any decided principles of architecture, it is like the mind of its originator, bold and unusual in its combinations. . . . There is no doubt it is a little Turkish among other things, on one side it has domes, pinnacles, and light, lavish ornamentation, such as Oriental taste delights in. . . . Yet, although the villa is Italian and cosmopolitan, the feeling is English. It is an English home in its substantiality, its home-like and comfortable aspects.

This masterpiece of paradox, in which confusion supplied the only unity, was typical of the leveling and imitative democratic mind, which cannot see that distinction implies difference. It is one of the most powerful arguments for the genius of Poe that, although he moved in a scene of monstrous and self-satisfied confusion, he conferred upon his own material a memorable unity.

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[667] Lewis Mumford. The description of Armsmear, and its application, is taken from *Sticks and Stones.* Lewis Mumford, Boni and Liveright, 1924. The original of the description comes from the *Art Journal* for 1876. Armsmear was built between 1855 and 1862, but it was the result of the type of culture prevalent a little earlier.

In the 1840's the ferment of disintegration of all ancient orders whatsoever was rapidly going on. The process was visibly impressed upon the objective world. Wood was enormously plentiful and correspondingly cheap. So cheap, frame structures imitating the Alhambra, and aping the Oriental, began to blotch and to make inroads upon the erstwhile semi-classical landscape. Cast iron balconies and jigsaw fretwork, " relieved " by Arabian inlays of garish tile and imitation stone, staggered horribly across the fronts of banks. Meticulous and useless finials, threatening architraves, and weak newel posts mutinied under the apparently colossal weight of false fronts. The world was losing all sense of proportion. America no longer imagined itself to be an ancient Roman or Greek state, it already knew better. The last of the fathers in knee breeks had now departed. Classical names for cities were out of style. Villes, Burgs, and Smith Cities began to infest the land. For a time there was even an attempt to be vaguely Egyptian in reservoirs and jails.[668]

The fashions were equally eclectic. Uncomfortable little boys, dressed like Scottish chiefs, were led about by negro nurses. Hoopskirts and gentility swept the streets, and everything else. Delicate chinless ladies with lacquered heart-shaped fans and heelless cloth slippers rested their Chinese feet upon balzerine pillows and listed to Swiss music boxes. Plumbers fitted the chandeliers with umbilical gas pipes. Old ladies who had known Aaron Burr and the *macaronis* of *Fraunce's Tavern*, were now discreetly confined with other family skeletons to upstairs apartments, where their granddaughters could not hear them swearing in the grand old style, and complaining of the prudish younger generation; of their insipid conversation, of the lack of capable partners at whist, and the lamentable dearth of drink.

Little girls were laced tightly at home, but so much tighter at

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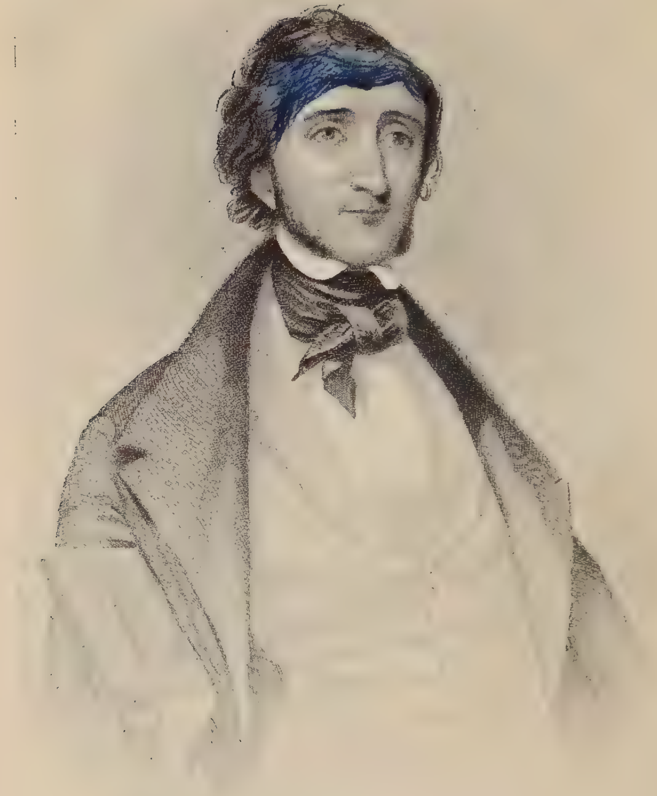
[668] Types of the " Egyptian " were the municipal reservoir at Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue, New York, on the site of the present Public Library, and Moyamensing Prison. Philadelphia. See illustration, page 811. The Old " Tombs " in New York City, and the Richmond Medical College, still standing, were also " Nilesque."

The Fashions of the Literati

A fashion plate from *Godey's Lady's Book*



Portrait of Edgar A. Poe

Which appeared with LOWELL's sketch of his life in *Graham's* for February, 1845.
A very poor portrait. Painted(?) in Philadelphia by A. C. SMITH, a local artist

From the original portrait in Graham's
Courtesy of John T. Snyder, Esq., of Pelham, New York

boarding-schools, that a lady who lost a portion of her respectability by delivering lectures to mixed audiences, ventured to remark, in the privacy of her diary, that "the results were doubtful." Transatlantic Victorianism was in full swing. The forties were now four years old, and the famous unknown poetasters and poetesses gathered themselves in the salons of the Manhattan of 325,000 souls — exactly as they do now. In 1844, they were known to each other as the *literati*. Mr. Poe, the distinguished-looking Southern gentleman with the soulful eyes, was sardonically preparing to make their obscurity visible to the future.

The most amazing thing about this curious era is that, not a doubt of its superiority to all the other ages that had preceded it, seems ever to have disturbed its collective mind. The apparently soon to be completed control of nature by machinery had suggested a doctrine of "progress," hitherto unheard of, but now extended to everything from politics to petticoats. The magazines, the newspapers, public speeches, essays, and novels all reeked with gratulatory self-complacence. The philosophy of the time was so completely saturated with the notion that nine *yeas* must necessarily be a more profound judgment than eight *nays*, and that humanity was bound to be a little better on Tuesday than it had been on Monday — that not an objection could be publicly registered. Above all, taste was "more genteel."

"And here," contemptuously says a notice in the "Editor's Table" of *Godey's Lady's Book* — "here are the full dress and the walking costume of 1800."

> The beginning of a new century, thus far in its progress, has developed most astonishingly the resources of mechanical arts, and better applied them to human convenience, comfort and improvement, than has ever before, in the history of the world, been effected. And we think, among other improvements, that the ladies have decidedly improved their fashions of dress. Look on these pictures, (*i.e.*, fashions of 1800) and then turn to our 'Fashion Plate,' and thank the Publisher of the *Lady's Book* for thus showing by contrast, the beauty and becomingness of our present costume.[669]

This was the same magazine to which Poe was glad to contribute *A Tale of the Ragged Mountains*, and to be thankful it was accepted. *Godey's Lady's Book,* in fact, was yet to play a rather important little part in his career, and those of certain ladies. Louis Godey, its editor, and Mrs. Hale were still his good friends. He needed them to live.

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[669] *Godey's Lady's Book* for April, 1844, page 199.

No wonder that, at times, Poe became impatient, or sardonic; he was practically alone in his protests and jest makings at the expense of his age. To expect that he should rise above it completely, is to ask the impossible. As a matter of fact, he did the best he could — he withdrew farther and farther into himself. When he did come out, it was generally to deliver a sting. That Poe felt a considerable amount of justifiable artistic and philosophic antipathy toward the America of the '40s, and that it was not all due to his own peculiarities, there can be no doubt. There was an immense cleavage between his artistry and his time. " Progress " had left him enormously alone.

In the Summer of 1844, with the arrival of hot weather, it became necessary to move Virginia to a cooler place in the country. The rural retreat chosen for the summer residence was an old farmhouse with Revolutionary traditions, on a farm along Bloomingdale Road, some five or six miles out of town. The house, which was for long known as "the house where *The Raven* was written," was situated in 1844 on what was then a rather conspicuous and rocky knoll, a few hundred feet from the northeast corner of the present Eighty-fourth Street and Broadway.[670 and 671]

The dwelling itself was of a familiar type of colonial farm architecture. A large main building with a smaller and lower

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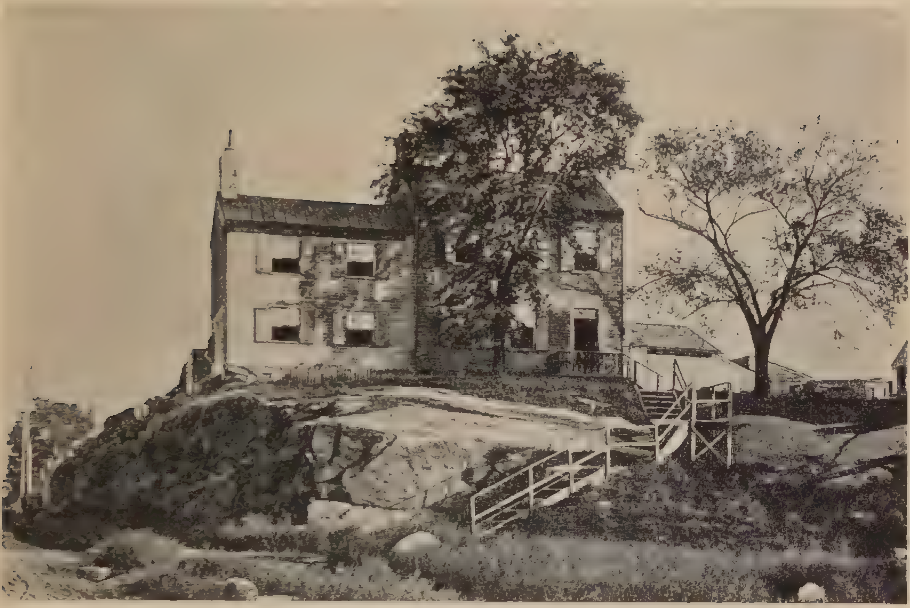
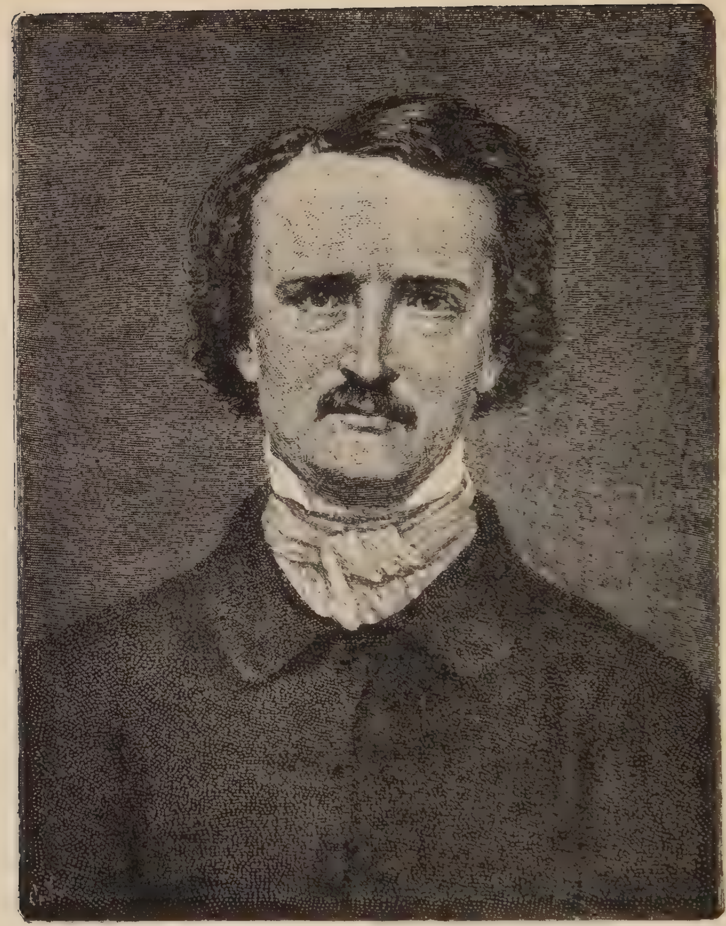
[670] The sources for the descriptions of the house and its environment, and of the events that took place there, are taken from Gill's *Life of Poe,* 1877, pages 147–150 and from illustrations made of the house while it was still standing. Also from photographs taken in 1876, reproductions, in the possession of the author. Also from the account in Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, page 113. The following original sources were also consulted. *Poe and the Raven,* by Gen. James R. O'Bierne (husband of Martha Brennan), in the *New York Mail and Express.* Also *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly,* an article by Tyrrell, September, 1883. Also material having to do with the removal of the Brennan mantel to the Hall of Philosophy, Columbia University; maps, city plans, prints of the neighborhood, and two private letters of neighbors of the Brennans in 1845, in which Poe is not mentioned.

[671] Gen. J. R. O'Bierne — "In those days . . . Patrick Brennan owned a farm of 216 acres, extending from a point about 200 feet west of Central Park to the Hudson River. . . . The homestead stood on 84th St. between Amsterdam Ave., and Broadway. . . ." See Harrison, vol. I, page 224.



The House in which *The Raven* was finished in 1844, near Eighty-fourth Street and Broadway, New York City

From a photograph taken in the 1870's, after grading
Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Historical Society



Edgar A. Poe about 1845

From a photograph of a daguerreotype taken by Brady, engraved and reproduced in Harper's New Monthly Magazine for December, 1889

Courtesy of Harper and Brothers

annex extended from one side. There were two low brick chimneys, one in the middle gable, and the other at the end of the annex. The dooryard of the house opened into Broadway just above Eighty-fourth Street. The path from the farm gate led past a little pond made by the spring, where wagoners stopped frequently to refresh themselves. The house and low outbuildings were well shaded by old trees, and the roof overtopped by a weeping willow, said to have been taken from a shoot by Napoleon's tomb at St. Helena. It was really the rear of the house that one approached from Bloomingdale Road (Broadway). The front, with its square windows and square-framed door, exhibited that curious aspect of half-horrified surprise which lends an almost human expression to some dwellings. Its windows stared down over Bloomingdale into the valley of the Hudson, and from the rock-ledged knoll upon which it stood, there was a magnificent sweep of unbroken rural landscape up and down the river. The fields before the dwelling sloped down to the river where the steamboats passed. There was a glimpse of the roofs of old Claremont about two miles above, and the cliffs of the New Jersey shore opposite. For miles, the meadows, woods, and little roads seemed pouring themselves into the valley as if in haste to tumble into the stream. Some distance above, at what is now Ninety-sixth Street, was a dock where the side-wheel steamers landed, and a cluster of roofs in a deep vale where a stream entered the Hudson. Here, passengers left from the neighboring farms for New York on the seven o'clock boat in the morning, fortifying themselves for the trip down at *Stryker's Bay Tavern,* kept by a fat host, Joseph Francis, who dispensed the neighborhood news, and cups of kindness. An occasional wagon or stage raised the dust along the farm fence, on its way down Bloomingdale Road to New York. The fare on the regular trips in the morning was one shilling, or " two bits," according to the year in which one was born. Most of the silver coins in general circulation were those adorned by the Mexican eagle holding the snake in his claws between two pillars.[672]

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[672] Up until at least 1850, most of the older generation continued to reckon orally in shillings and pence. It was long doubtful whether dollar marks should go

Sometime during the Spring, perhaps on a stroll out Bloomingdale Road, Poe had become acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Brennan "of similar Melanesian descent, a hospitable agriculturist and his consort," who with their daughter Martha, a young girl of about fourteen years, and five or six younger children, lived on the farm of 216 acres where they raised truck for the city markets, fruit, and flowers. The Brennans occupied the place for nearly fifty years, and seem to have taken boarders from time to time, especially in the Summer. Poe evidently struck a bargain with them for himself, Mrs. Clemm, and Virginia. He was quite enchanted with the spot, the magnificent view, the excellent food, and the good nature of his hosts.

About the beginning of July, 1844, he gave up his room on Ann Street, forsook Sandy Welsh's cellar and other haunts about town, and gathering up Mrs. Clemm and Virginia at 130 Greenwich Street, drove out to the Brennan's. Despite the numerous children and dogs, he described the place later as "a perfect heaven." The last perfectly peaceful and happy hours that he was to know were passed under its roof. It still seemed possible, for those who could hope against hope, that in a place such as this Virginia *might* get well.

To Mrs. Clemm and Virginia, after the period of disintegration of the home in Philadelphia, and the anxious days on Greenwich Street, with Edgar roaming about the journalistic purlieus, and no assurance of where the next week's board was to come from, "Bloomingdale on the Hudson" must have seemed a little paradise. Poe was removed from influences which kept Mrs. Clemm in continual anxiety, Virginia was in healthful surroundings, and "Muddie" herself was in a place where she could luxuriate in the space, plenty, and respectability of being a matronly boarder. Doubtless she and Mrs. Brennan were soon on excellent gossiping terms. The simple friendship with the good Irish couple and the Poes was long kept up, and seems to have had something to

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before or after figures (see, for instance, Poe's letters to John Allan). Owing to defective coinage laws, and the gold and silver parity, United States coins were exported and "change" was largely confined to Mexican money. This went at face value as long as the eagle and pillars on the coin were visible. See also Sumner, *History of American Currency.*

do with the latter's subsequent removes and places of residence. Poe was now sufficiently well known to be an object of considerable curiosity to simple folk; his mode of life was noted and afterward remembered.

Mrs. Clemm is said to have had a room down stairs. Poe and Virginia occupied a garret under the eaves, beneath which, running clear across the house with a door that looked out upon Bloomingdale Road, and a large open fireplace with a rather handsomely carved mantel, was the poet's study. It was in this room that *The Raven* was completed, and as some of its furnishings have entered the realm of eternity in imaginative literature, its contents have been the subject of curious inquiry.

The room, it seems, had been occupied by a former boarder of the Brennans, a Frenchman who had been an officer under Napoleon, and had gone into exile after the collapse of the first imperial régime. The walls were decorated with French military prints; there was a clock; heavy hangings, of some sort, after the Empire manner; several pieces of heavy, cloth-lined furniture; a bookcase; and an upright flat-topped desk. Two rather small windows with the usual square panes of old-fashioned, thick glass gave a view across the Hudson to New Jersey on the front, while a door in the rear opened out on the dooryard towards Broadway. In addition to this, there was an interior door that led into the center hallway.

> Above the door opening into the hallway, stood the 'pallid bust of Pallas.' It was a little plaster cast and occupied a shelf nailed to the door casing, immediately behind the bust, and occupying the space between the top casing and the ceiling; a number of little panes of smoked glass took the place of the partition.[673]

On stormy nights, the wind swept up and down the Hudson Valley, just as it now scours along Riverside Drive, and shook the exposed house perched on the knoll. That some of these seemingly trivial objects and circumstances served to furnish forth part of the scenery and machinery of *The Raven* during the long hours of the Fall and Summer of 1844, when it was taking its final shape in this apartment, there can be little doubt.

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[673] Description from Gen. James O'Bierne (husband of Martha Brennan) long familiar with the Brennan house. O'Bierne continues — "This bust of Minerva was either removed or broken by one of the Brennan tenants after the family had moved to the city." *New York Mail and Express*, see notes 670, 671. It must be remembered that Gen. O'Bierne's description of the position of the bust with the light *behind* it, was written *after* the controversy had arisen about the shadow on the floor. Poe is said to have suggested such a solution himself in Richmond in 1849.

The Brennans afterward recalled many of the incidents of Poe's sojourn with them: the long hours he spent in the room downstairs writing, of Poe and Virginia seated at the western windows watching the sunsets across the Hudson, of the leaves of manuscript and correspondence scattered over the broad planked floor of the room with the bust, and of the hours which Poe spent dreaming on a bench by the pond, under a shade tree whence the children would call him in to meals. Young Tom Brennan remembered how the fascinating gentleman with the cane drew designs in the dust, and how Poe used to wander off to Mount Tom and sit for hours gazing at the Hudson and dreaming. Martha Brennan, who was described by the neighbors as a dark-haired Irish beauty with blue eyes, drove her family to early mass, dressed in a black silk bodice with a narrow lace collar, and a lace-trimmed poke bonnet, tied under her chin with a black satin bow. She was about fifteen during the Summer of the Poes' stay, and made an ideal companion for Virginia whom she saw pasting Poe's manuscript together into the long rolls of which the child-wife was very proud, although having little conception of their meaning. Their size and shape, the beautiful characters engrossed upon them by her husband's copper-plate pen, and their marvelous length when unrolled, constituted her literary appreciation. Mrs. Clemm was more understanding. She listened patiently, in the rôle of a professional enthusiast, to much of Poe's work, and brewed him coffee when he grew tired. It seems to have been Poe's custom to rely greatly upon the effects of his stories and poems when spoken, and there can be no doubt that his strong sense of euphony and of the sonorous would lead him to read aloud and recite to whomsoever would listen. There is testimony that he did so, and, lacking an audience, he was overheard to be composing aloud.

Poe was free of visitors on the farm, but made occasional trips to New York, walking when he did not have the fare, as was frequently the case. Mrs. Brennan said that the board was always paid. During the Summer, Poe must have relied for his " income " on three stories sent to Godey, a good friend who would pay him in advance, the article on Lowell placed with *Graham's,* and his contributions to the *Columbian Magazine* of *The Angel of the Odd* and *Mesmeric Revelation,* a subject which, together with spiritualistic manifestations, was then much in the public mind. In *The Literary Life of Thingum Bob, Esq.,* one of Poe's most highly autobiographical and ironical sketches, he again returned to the scenes of his youth in Richmond, in a satiric vein, and probably took a secret pleasure in placing it in his home town with the *Southern Literary Messenger,* where it appeared in December, 1844, and was copied into the *Broadway Journal* a little later. *The Premature Burial* also returned for its literal setting to some boat trip on the James, years before, perhaps with Burling. This story, first published at Philadelphia in the *Dollar Newspaper* for July 31, 1844, is one of the most genuinely morbid of any that Poe tossed off. It seems to have arisen from the sense of oppression and inevitable catastrophe which had long been a concomitant of his melancholia, or some dream of smothering, perhaps due to his heart trouble.[674]

What the rather tired looking gentleman was thinking about as he sat on the bench under the trees at the Brennans', while the bees hummed, would no doubt have astonished the little folks who called him to dinner from time to time could they have been familiar with the recesses of his mind. Poe was not calmly reveling in the pastoral scene about him. Somehow or other, in the alembic of his nature, it was thus that he beheld the world:

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[674] Poe's story of *Loss of Breath,* and *The Tell-Tale Heart* both belong to this same type of thing. Dreams caused by a bad heart, a sense of oppression, the waking struggle with a consequent feeling of apprehension, and the fear of dying while asleep, or being buried while in a torpor, may account for such of the machinery of the plot and the imagery in such stories. For instance:

" In all that I endured there was no physical suffering, but of moral distress an infinitude. My fancy grew charnal. I talked ' of worms, of tombs, and epitaphs.' I was lost in reveries of death, and the idea of premature burial held continual possession of my brain. The ghastly Danger to which I was subjected, haunted me day and night. In the former, the torture of meditation was excessive, in the latter supreme." — Poe's *Premature Burial.*

> I looked; and the unseen figure, which still grasped me by the wrist, had caused to be thrown open the graves of all mankind; and from each issued the faint phosphoric radiance of decay; so that I could see into the innermost recesses, and there view the shrouded bodies in their sad and solemn slumbers with the worm. But, alas! the real sleepers were fewer, by many millions, than those who slumbered not at all; and there was a feeble struggling; and there was a sad unrest; and from out of the depths of the countless pits there came a melancholy rustling from the garments of the buried. And, of those who seemed tranquilly to repose, I saw that a vast number had changed, in a greater or less degree, the rigid and uneasy position in which they had originally been entombed.[675]

Perhaps all of the coffee which Mrs. Clemm brewed after such a recital was not consumed by Edgar. It was from the sale of such dreams as these, some of which were composed amid the charming surroundings of the lower Hudson Valley, that Poe attempted to support himself during the Summer of 1844. He seems to have just managed to pay his board. In May, he had been so poor as not to be able to lift from the post-office letters written to him from Georgia by Dr. Chivers. The postage was about twelve cents.[676]

That *The Raven* assumed its final form at Eighty-fourth Street and Broadway there can be no doubt. That Poe had brought an earlier draft of it with him when he arrived there, is equally certain. As has already been shown, the germ of the idea had originated in Philadelphia about four years before with Poe's review of *Barnaby Rudge* in which the bird is found. Lowell recognized this in his *Fable for Critics:*

> Here comes Poe with his Raven, like Barnaby Rudge,
> Three fifths of him genius, and two fifths sheer fudge. . . .

It now seems highly probable that the early poem was discussed with Hirst in the rambles about Philadelphia, and that he may have contributed some ideas to it that led to his later claims to have "written" it.[601] The story told by Mrs. Weiss, which she says Poe related to her in Richmond shortly before his death, that the bird was originally an owl, will bear inspection.[677] That the poem was in existence in some form as early as the Summer of 1842 seems fairly certain, as it was then shown by Poe to Mrs. Barhyte, a contributor to the *New York Mirror*. It was then, or in the next Summer, of 1843, that the lines suggested by a child were introduced.[612] The next definite news about it is from Rosenbach, the Philadelphia acquaintance, who said that as early as the winter of 1843–44 he had read *The Raven*, and relates that about the same time it was offered to Graham when the collection for Mrs. Clemm was taken up. Colonel Du Solle also tells that, early in 1844, Poe was trying it on journalistic friends about Philadelphia.[642] After the removal to New York, we again hear of its being read and receiving emandations at the hands of friends meeting in Sandy Welsh's cellar on Ann Street in the late Spring.[664] Thus the period of its incubation which followed Poe's typically slow method of verse composition can be fairly certainly traced. It was this manuscript which he brought with him to the Brennans in the Summer of 1844.

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[675] From Poe's *Premature Burial.*

[676] Chivers to Poe, Oakey Grove, Georgia, May 15, 1844. Postage between Poe and Chivers was evidently a considerable difficulty. See Chivers' reference to the matter in his letter to Poe of September 26, 1842.

"Events not to be controlled have prevented me from making, at any time, any serious effort in what, under happier circumstances, would have been the field of my choice," said Poe, and adds, "With me, poetry has not been a purpose, but a passion; and the passions should be held in reverence; they must not — they cannot at will be excited, with an eye to the paltry compensations, or the more paltry commendations, of mankind." [678] At the farm overlooking the Hudson, for a very brief time, the "happier circumstances" seem to have been approached, and so, with an eye to no paltry compensations, Poe now turned himself diligently to finishing what he held to be his popular masterpiece, in the room where, despite Mrs. Brennan's protestations, he once absent-mindedly carved his name on the mantelpiece.

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[677] *Home Life of Poe*, page 185.

"His first intention, he said, had been to write a short poem only, based upon the incident of an *Owl* — a night-bird, the bird of wisdom — with its ghostly presence and inscrutable gaze entering the window of a vault or chamber where he sat beside the bier of the lost *Lenore* . . . he exchanged the owl for the Raven, for . . . the 'Nevermore,' and the poem, despite himself had grown beyond the length intended . . . the owl, a night-bird, would be attracted by the lighted window, and . . . would be more appropriate to the . . . Owl, Minerva's Bird," etc.

[678] Poe to Lowell, July 2, 1844.

Much of the composition must have gone on during the quiet hours of the night. It was now that he probably saw the whole poem in its complete form; and added, to the already conceived antiphonal responses of the bird, the grotesque, eerie, and romantic scenery and incidents that he knew so well how to blend. During the autumn nights when the draughty farmhouse was shaken by the blasts, when the fire was dying, the tree branches tapping at the windows, and the light behind the transom threw the shadow of the bust of Pallas on the floor, the mind of the poet fused the actual scene in which he found himself with the furniture of that ideal apartment of his dreams. Into this room, he introduced the raven from *Barnaby Rudge* with the improvement he had already suggested, that "Its croakings might have been prophetically heard in the course of the drama."

The sense of utter despair and inevitable frustration came from within the man himself, as an expression of his own melancholy, the reasons for which may be traced in his nature, and the tragic events of his life. The introduction of Poe's favorite theme of the "Lost Beloved," taken together with the fatal implication of the Raven's remark, seems to plainly indicate that the author had, by this time, fully realized that his attempt, or the necessity that had been forced upon him by the nature of his marriage, to substitute a dream for the reality of love, led inevitably to despair. Nor was there now any hope for him to successfully capture, in ideality, what had been denied him in fact. On reading the poem, R. H. Horne wrote Poe about a year later: [679]

> I am of the same opinion as Miss Barrett (Mrs. Browning) about *The Raven,* and it also seems to me that the poet intends to represent a very painful condition (of) mind, as of an imagination that was liable to topple over into some delirium or an abyss of melancholy, from the continuity of one unvaried emotion.

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[679] Horne to Poe, Fitzroy Park, Highgate, London, May 17, 1845.

Now this is such an excellent description of Poe's exact state of mind, and of what actually occurred, that a professional psychologist could do no better. That the "continuity of one unvaried emotion" was of a sexual nature, is plain from the use of a lost woman to shadow it forth. "As a lover I am done," says Poe in effect, "Nevermore!" Nor was there any hope in the hereafter. The thought burned into his heart with the eyes of a demon, and he could not drive it away. It was always there, "one unvaried emotion" — "that was liable to topple over into some delirium." That, at times, it did so topple, is perfectly clear. It is the kind of despair that drives men to suicide, and three years later we find the still young man — who found this unhappy bird perched triumphant over the symbol of all his learning and art — trying to commit suicide by drinking laudanum. Those who think *The Raven* is a mere literary *tour de force* overlook what it was that *forced the tour*.

Nor does a mere exposition of literary sources explain the psychic machinery in the use of the material, which, as in every poem, came from somewhere. Poe was almost certainly influenced in the refrain of *The Raven* by such poems as Thomas Holly Chivers' *Lament on the Death of My Mother*. A few lines will serve to illustrate:

> . . . Nor where the pleasures of the world are sought
> Nor where the sorrows of the earth are found —
> Nor on the borders of the great deep sea,
> Wilt thou return again from heaven to me — [680]
> No, nevermore!

And this, from Chivers' *To Allegra in Heaven*,[681] is even more suggestive in both meter and refrain:

> Thy dear father will to-morrow lay thy body with deep sorrow,
> In the grave which is so narrow, there to rest forevermore, — etc., etc., etc.

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[680] In the Middletown, Connecticut, *Sentinel and Witness*, 1837.

[681] This appeared in Chivers' volume, *The Lost Pleiad*. There is mention of previous publication of this poem in 1842. The manuscript passed through Poe's hands. Chivers' poem of *Isadore* supplies a complete equivalent for the dramatic machinery of *The Raven*. Poe praised it as "original."

Whole stanzas and poems might be quoted, especially *Isadore,* and General Pike's poems, with which Poe was familiar by review, are also aspirants to the honors of originals, as their author proclaimed. Hirst, Chivers, Pike, and a host of other little fellows, all claimed to have a finger in the big pie. It is possible, by using the magnifying glass of erudite research, to find the trace of their thumb marks on the crust even now. Mr. Poe, however, was the cook; he mixed it, baked it, and served it up piping hot.

Poe's own explanation of how the poem was concocted in *How I Wrote the Raven,* or *The Philosophy of Composition,* is, in the final analysis, not an explanation at all. It was simply his own effort to rationalize upon, and to make apparently logical *to himself,* his own creative processes. This critical essay was part of his attempt to project himself as the almighty reasoner, as it was also part of his propaganda for making *The Raven* popular. People asked him the question, " Mr. Poe, how did you write *The Raven?* " The essay was a *perfectly reasonable* reply. Instead of falling back on the old theory of mysterious and divine inspiration, which has ever been the poet's method of dodging self-analysis, Poe, by his reply, not only silenced the Philistines but also added to his reputation as a logical genius. Among those whom he was trying to convince, he included himself. The real question would have been not, " Mr. Poe, *how* did you write *The Raven?* " but "*Why* did you, Mr. Poe? " For in *How I Wrote the Raven,* Poe, as he must do, to keep from facing the realities of his own condition, utterly dodges the issue as to why it was that his psyche was drawn towards the type of material it selects to mold as it did. The explanation of the critical essay does not explain what it was meant as a rationalization to conceal.

There is this, however, to be said. The long period over which the composition of *The Raven* stretched, a period of four years at least, shows that, into the arrangement and composition of it, went a deal of critical thinking, artistic analysis, a logical arrangement of effects, and a painstaking construction of the spinal narrative which no mere emotion could have provided. In it, is the deliberate device of a musical counter theme, and effects of assonance, rhyme, and meter which show a profoundly reasoned knowledge of the poet's art. That the images in many instances produced, seemingly simultaneously, the words and the rhythms with which to express themselves, there can be small doubt.[682] But that Poe was artist enough to manufacture successfully during the long fabrication of the poem those sections where such "inspiration" did not occur, is only to say that he was a fine poet. No lyric warbler would have been equal to the task. In *How I Wrote the Raven* a part of this process of ratiocination is certainly shadowed forth on a critical basis. There is value in that.

The whole matter can be generally summed up by saying that the choice of the material was involuntary, but its method of treatment a highly reasoned and critical process. Above and beyond all this, remains the fact that, in the case of *The Raven,* the perfect blending of these two processes became a unity which resulted in a work of art. The ghost of nothing had been endowed with memorable form.

By the end of the Summer of 1844, certainly in the Autumn, the poem was complete. It was about this time that we hear of Poe reciting it to William R. Wallace, a young New York lawyer who dabbled in verse himself, although not as extensively as Hirst.[683] It was Poe's custom, it seems, to spend part of his time on the porch of the old *Stryker's Bay Tavern* that overhung the stream which, then, ran into the Hudson at Ninety-sixth Street, near the old ferry dock about a mile from the Brennan farm. The region about Stryker's Bay: Bloomingdale Village, just in front of the Brennan House, Silvan Grove between One Hundred Twenty-first and One Hundred Twenty-second Streets, where the steamboats from the foot of Wall Street landed, indeed the entire Harlem region, was then the summer playground of New York. The river was the scene of constant steamboat races between such old favorites of the '40s as the "Globe," the "Champion," or the "Cleopatra." These, in their hurry, frequently failed to stop to pick up passengers at side landings, and rushed by, steampipes roaring, smoke and sparks belching from the stacks, while the gentlemen passengers gathered at the bar forward to bet on the result.

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[682] See Coleridge: *Of the Fragment of Kubla Khan,* page 52. *Christabel, Kubla Khan,* etc., 1816 edition.

[683] In the Summer or Fall of 1848, Wallace took Poe to Mathew B. Brady to have a daguerreotype taken, at 205 Broadway. See full-page advertisement in the New York Directory for 1848–9 for location of Brady's galleries.

At the *Stryker's Bay Tavern,* Poe again met Thomas Dunn English who had given up editing in Philadelphia and had come, like Poe, to live in New York. There Poe read *The Raven* to Wallace, whose expressions of appreciation, it appears, were not thought by the poet to be adequate to the occasion. Poe, on his part, assured his auditor that he had just listened to the greatest poem in the language. Some allowance must be made for the poet's still being in the full flush of his first enthusiasm after composition. That Poe did not think *The Raven* the best poem he wrote, seems evident from his own theories of poetry, and other remarks afterward. That it was his show piece, and that he never lost a chance to further it, is also evident. He felt it to be pitched in a popular key, and a certain forensic and dramatic value in it made it his favorite for recitations on every occasion.

Still another account of Poe's reading of *The Raven,* and of his life on the farm, comes from Martha Brennan, the farmer's daughter. In it the pitiable condition of Virginia is plainly evident:

> During two years she knew him intimately and never saw him affected by liquor or do aught that evinced the wild impetuous nature with which he has been accredited. He was the gentlest of husbands and devoted to his invalid wife. *Frequently when she was weaker than usual, he carried her tenderly from her room to the dinner-table and satisfied every whim.*
>
> Mrs. Brennan was noted for her kindheartedness and sympathetic nature, and once I heard her say that Poe read *The Raven* to her one evening before he sent it to the *Mirror.* . . .
>
> On other days he would wander through the surrounding woods, and, returning in the afternoon, sit in the big room, as it used to be called, by a window and work unceasingly with pen and paper, until the evening shadows. . . .[670]

During the Summer, Poe continued his correspondence with James Russell Lowell. The principal item of their " epistolary conversations " was the biography of Poe which Lowell was preparing for the forthcoming September issue of *Graham's*. Lowell writes Poe that he is in one of his fits of constitutional indolence, and had delayed starting to write. The indolence, he says, "was not counteracted by proper training in my childhood. You may be sure I am not one of those who follow a fashion which is hardly yet extinct, and call upon the good, easy world to accept my faults in proof of my genius."[684] This kind of disguised preaching was probably not very acceptable to Poe. In the same letter, Lowell asks him for "some sort of a spiritual biography . . . *your own estimate of your life.*"

In an earlier letter to Lowell, Poe had complained of an article on "American Poetry" in the *London Foreign Quarterly* in which he had been referred to as an imitator of Tennyson.[685] This article Poe felt had been written or inspired by Dickens — "I have private personal reasons for knowing this." The reasons were that this article contained items of information which Poe had given to Dickens in letters, and in his interviews in Philadelphia. Lowell writes Poe later that the article had been written by one Foster, but Poe, on good grounds, remained unconvinced that Dickens had not had a hand in it.

At the beginning of July, Poe wrote Lowell, in answer to a request for his "spiritual biography," a letter which throws an important light on his character.[686] Of this letter Professor George E. Woodberry aptly remarks:

> A poet's analysis of his original temperament, if it be sincere, is of the highest value; for a man's conception of his own character, particularly if it be of an introspective turn, counts often as one of the most powerful influences that shape his acts.[687]

In the letter mentioned, Poe says that he can sympathize with Lowell in his fits of constitutional indolence, which is one of his own besetting failings. He is, he says, slothful and extremely industrious by fits. At times, any intellectual activity becomes a kind of torture, and the only pleasure he had in life was in solitary communion with nature while rambling amid the mountains and the woods, " the altars " of Byron. This theory is further made plain in his poem of *In Youth Have I Known,* often entitled *Stanzas,* which took its flight from the poem of Byron called *The Island.* It was a powerful influence on his thought and artistic expression. Poe also tells Lowell that he is only negatively ambitious, and is only spurred on now and then to excel fools because he cannot bear to let foolish persons imagine they can excel him. He says he really understands the vanity of temporal life, and lives in a continual reverie concerning the future. How far removed Poe was from the driving doctrine of his age, " Progress," may be seen in the lines of this letter, where he says that he feels that he has no faith in human perfectability, and that the exertions of man do not appreciably affect his nature, that we are no happier, nor wiser than we were 6,000 years ago —

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[684] Lowell to Poe, Elmwood, June 27, 1844.
[685] Poe to Lowell, New York, May 28, 1844.
[686] Poe to Lowell, New York, July 2, 1844.
[687] Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, page 90.

> The result will never vary — and to suppose that it will, is to suppose that the foregone man has lived in vain — that the foregone time is but the rudiment of the future — that the myriads who have perished have not been upon equal footing with ourselves — nor are we with our own posterity. I cannot agree to lose sight of man the individual in man the mass. — I have no belief in spirituality.[686]

In this paragraph, Poe definitely rejects the three darling concepts of his time and place, progress, democracy, and supernaturalism. The rest of this letter is concerned with the poet's theories about spirit, matter, time, and space, and his conception of the nature of the universe and of man. About the same time, Poe was conducting a correspondence with Dr. Chivers dealing with the same themes, and a discussion of the transcendental philosophy of the time. In *Mesmeric Revelations,* a tale published in the *Columbian Magazine* in August, he elaborated upon such matters, and sent a copy of the periodical to both Lowell and Chivers.[688]

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[688] Poe attended the lectures of Andrew Jackson Davis, given in New York about this time, in which mesmerism, transcendental theories, and psychic phenomena were discussed. Poe's reaction to this kind of " thought " was one of contempt. See his remark on Andrew Jackson Davis in his *Marginalia.* Some of the ideas gathered from Davis and similar " philosophers " were used by Poe in his stories. *Mesmeric Revelations* was republished in England. Also see note 700. *Valdemar* attracted the attention of the Brownings, see note 707.

After an interval of over a year, Poe now once more resumed his correspondence with Thomas:

New York, *Sept.* 8, 1844

MY DEAR THOMAS, — I received yours with sincere pleasure, and nearly as sincere surprise; for while you were wondering that I did not write to *you*, I was making up my mind that you had forgotten *me* altogether.

I have left Philadelphia, and am living, at present about five miles out of New York. For the last seven or eight months I have been playing hermit in earnest, nor have I seen a living soul out side of my family — who are well and desire to be kindly remembered. When I say 'well,' I only mean (as regards Virginia) as well as usual. Her health remains excessively precarious.

Touching *The Beechen Tree* (*a poem by Thomas*) I remember it well and pleasantly. I have not yet seen a published copy, but will get one forthwith and notice it as it deserves — and it deserves high praise — at the first opportunity I get. At present I am so much out of the world that I may not be able to do anything immediately.

Thank God! Richard (whom you know) is himself again. Tell Dow so; but he won't believe it. I am working at a variety of things (all of which you shall behold in the end) — and with an ardor of which I did not believe myself capable.

Let me hear from you soon, my dear Thomas, and believe me *ever*

Your friend, POE

Poe had indeed retired from the world. He was, during the Summer of 1844, as he desired to be, completely withdrawn from it. The effect upon his imagination, while he had been playing hermit, had been most satisfactory. Unfortunately, the means for continuing this secluded creative existence appear, now, to have been completely exhausted. Winter was approaching, and with it would come the end of the stay on the farm. To Mrs. Clemm, the great question must have been not, " Where will *The Raven* be published? " but " Wherewithal shall we continue to exist? " Like a schoolboy after a long vacation, " Eddie " shrank from, and deferred to the last minute, a renewed contract with the working world. Towards the end of September, 1844, Mrs. Clemm, in desperation, took the matter in her own hands. She went to the city to look up work for Poe, and no doubt at his own suggestion, called upon the editor of the *New York Mirror*, Nathaniel Parker Willis. Poe had been in correspondence with Willis some time before, and both were known to each other by reputation. Mr. Willis has left an account of his first, but by no means last, interview with Mrs. Clemm:

> Our first knowledge of Mr. Poe's removal to this city (New York) was by a call which we received from a lady who introduced herself to us as the mother of his wife. She was in search of employment for him, and she excused her errand by mentioning that he was ill, and that her daughter was a confirmed invalid, and that her circumstances were such as compelled her taking it upon herself. The countenance of this lady, made beautiful and saintly with an evidently complete giving up of her life to privation and sorrowful tenderness, her gentle and mournful voice, urging its plea, her long forgotten but habitual and unconsciously refined manners, and her appealing, and yet appreciative mention of the claims and abilities of her son, disclosed at once the presence of one of those angels upon earth that women in adversity can be. . . .[689]

Many sad rehearsals of this pathetic act had made Mrs. Clemm perfect in word and gesture. Mr. Willis, who was a fine Christian man, could not deny the widow in distress, and took the occasion to hire a very great editor at a very small salary.

About the time that Mrs. Clemm paid her visit, Mr. Willis was preparing to enlarge the scope of his business by slightly changing the title of his paper, and bringing it out both daily and weekly as the *Evening Mirror*, the weekly issue to be a kind of review of current events, news, politics, and literary affairs. In this scheme, a man with Poe's abilities, reputation, and experience would be a valuable aid. Edgar Allan Poe was therefore, engaged as a " mechanical paragraphist," the nearest approach to the modern columnist, which the journalistic hierarchy then afforded. In addition to doing journalistic repartee, clipping sundry items, writing reviews, arranging for reciprocal puffs, and scribbling short articles, it is probable that Poe was also asked to look over the contributions sent in by mail, to retouch copy, and help with the layout. It was the kind of a job which he satirized in the little sketch of *X-ing a Paragrab*, a story, by the way, taken from a French source.

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[689] N. P. Willis in the *Home Journal*, October 13, 1849, just after Poe's death.

Poe was given a desk in the corner, where he came every morning at nine o'clock and worked steadily till the paper went to press. During Poe's connection with the *Evening Mirror,* Willis bears testimony that he saw but one side of Poe's character — " one presentiment of the man — a quiet, patient, industrious, and most gentlemanly person, commanding the utmost respect and good feelings by his unvarying deportment and ability." [689] Poe was not only industrious, but complied with his chief's suggestions when asked to make the tone of his criticisms less acrid, or to modify his irony to a more cheerful strain. On October 7, 1844, the new *Evening Mirror* first appeared, and in it were items which could have come from no pen but Poe's.

The new position provided the means of existence, but it was undoubtedly galling to Poe to occupy a subordinate position after filling so important a chair as the editorship of *Graham's*. Nevertheless he made the best of it. In the second number there was a highly favorable mention of Miss Barrett (afterwards Mrs. Browning) that was followed later by another. Through Horne and Miss Barrett, Poe hoped to draw the attention of Tennyson and others to himself and thus to further his English fame. *The Raven* he was then playing as his lucky card, and before he left Willis, he had persuaded the editor to publish it. In various other ways, legitimately enough, Poe used the columns of the *Mirror* to further his views. The *Stylus* was moribund but by no means buried, and Poe was only looking for another chance to climb into a better saddle. During the Autumn of 1844 he was doubtless introspective enough after the long Summer of dreaming and isolation, and the constant good nature and talkative, sunny temper of Willis was no doubt, at times, a severe trial to Poe.

The family still remained at the Brennans, on account of the comfortable living, its reasonable cost, and Virginia's health. The residence on the farm, however, necessitated a five-mile journey each way for Poe, who did not always have the bus or boat fare, and these walks required more energy than he possessed. In November, 1844, he therefore moved Mrs. Clemm and Virginia back to town, where he could be near the office. Poe's own estimate of his job, and of the importance of the paper he was now engaged with, may be found in a few lines about it sent to the *Columbia Spy* the June before.[690]

> — The literary world of Gotham is not particularly busy. Mr. Willis, I see, has issued a very handsome edition of his poems — the only complete edition — with a portrait. Few men have received more abuse, deserving it less than the author of *Melanie*. I never read a paper from his pen, in the *New Mirror* without regretting his abandonment of Glen Mary, and the tranquillity and leisure he might there have found. In its retirement he might have accomplished much, both for himself and for posterity, but, chained (to the) oar of a mere weekly paper, professedly addressing the frivolous and the fashionable, what can he now hope for but for a gradual sinking into the slough of the Public disregard? For *his* sake, I do sincerely wish the *New Mirror* would go the way of all flesh.

It was this same oar to which Poe now found himself chained, while no doubt regretting his seclusion at the Bloomingdale Farm. Mr. Willis, however, was a good friend, kindly, a man of wide reputation, and one who exercised a considerable influence upon Poe's life and fame. He was one of the outstanding figures of the *literati* in the Manhattan of the '40s, one of those secondary literary-journalistic figures which the time produced, who exercised a forgotten but important influence upon the contemporary American scene. "He will be remembered," says his biographer in 1869, "not as a philosopher or a celestial genius, but as a man eminently human, with almost unique endowments, who contributed his share to the good-will, cheerful enjoyment, and intellectual life of the present."

Nathaniel Parker Willis[691] was a native of Portland, Maine, where he was born in January, 1806. His father was also a journalist who published an early religious journal, the *Boston Recorder,* founded in 1816. Young Willis attended the Boston Latin School, and graduated from Yale in 1827. He early be-

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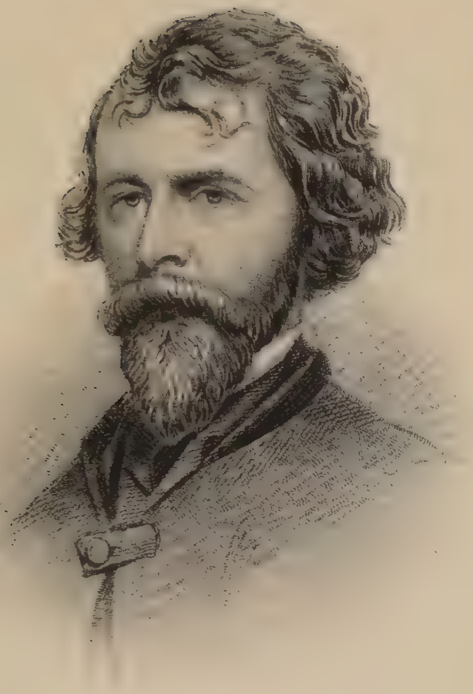
[690] See page 597.

[691] The material for this brief sketch of Willis has been drawn from various sources, chiefly a biography appended to *The Poems, Sacred, Passionate, and Humorous,* Nathaniel Parker Willis, Clark and Maynard, publishers, 5 Barclay Street, New York, 1869; *The Diary* of Elizabeth Oakes Smith; Poe's notice of Willis in the *Literati;* letters; notices; and other minor mention.

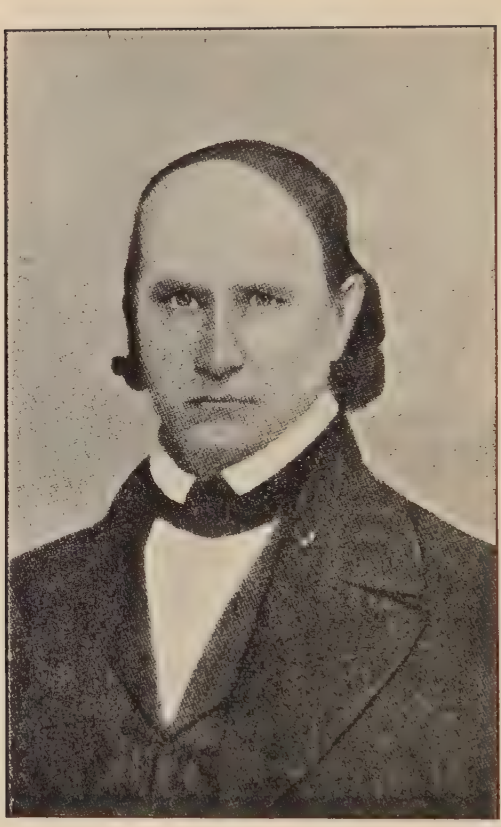


N. P. Willis

Editor of the New York *Evening Mirror* and later of *The Home Journal*

From the portrait affixed to a volume of his poems mentioned by Poe in his sketch of Willis

Property of the author



Dr. Thomas Holley Chivers

of Oakey Grove, Georgia

A close friend of POE, and an interesting but largely forgotten figure, whose story deserves to be told

From a photograph

came a poet, and published a youthful volume of a religious cast but combining a few pieces of pleasant fancy.

After college, Willis devoted himself to literature and edited the *Legendary,* a series of volumes of tales published by S. G. Goodrich. He then established the *American Monthly Magazine* in Boston. His " Editors Table " in the *American* " in which he treated of current literary topics, of art, books, and personal experience, was eminently sparkling and reasonable," and he gathered about him a rather felicitous but unimportant group.

By this time Willis had become a force in contemporary journalism and criticism. He became friends with George P. Morris, and merged his magazine with the *New York Mirror,* conducted heretofore by Morris. The policy of the paper combined that of the cheaper magazines of the day and the policies of " penny paper " journalism, first inaugurated by the *New York Sun.*[654] In short, Willis was one of the early exploiters of modern publicity and advertising methods. The policy was a success, and he was, consequently, able to visit Europe in 1834.

Willis's impressions of the Old World were communicated to the columns of the *Mirror* with considerable grace and gusto. This type of feature and travel reporting was then a novelty, and his letters created a sensation that led to a widespread fame and considerable financial success.[692] He bore letters which gave him *entrée* to English literary circles of some repute, where his natural charm rendered him popular and enabled him to write sketches of such literary personages as Moore, Disraeli, D'Orsay, Bulwer Lytton, and Lady Blessington. Mr. Willis had a considerable social, and a minor literary success abroad, due to the influence of his friends. In 1835, he married Mary Leighton Stace, the daughter of the Commissary-General at Woolwich Arsenal, and returned to the United States with his bride, where they purchased a farm, known as Glen-Mary on the Susquehanna. From here he wrote his *Letters from Under a Bridge,* a series of apt landscape sketches and pictures of rural life.

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[692] The fashion, thus created by Willis, was followed later by Bayard Taylor, and Henry Ward Beecher in some of his *Star Papers.* To modern eyes these offerings appear superficial, pretty, and insipid.

Deaths and financial misfortunes soon followed, forcing him to abandon *Glen-Mary,* and to return to New York where, with a Dr. Porter, he established the *Corsair* in the late '30s. Returning to England again, he secured Thackeray as a contributor, and published a volume of prose and poetry under the title of *Loiterings of Travel.* Two plays followed, *Bianca Visconti,* and *Tortesa.* The latter was reviewed by Poe in the *Pittsburgh Literary Examiner* for July, 1839, and shortly afterward, in 1841, Poe and Willis began correspondence.[693]

Upon Willis's second return to the United States, he abandoned publication of the *Corsair* with Porter, and again resumed relations with Morris of the *New Mirror.* In October, 1844, this paper became the *Evening Mirror,* and it was at this time that Willis secured the assistance of Poe. In January, 1845, the *Evening Mirror* printed Poe's *Raven,* for which it is chiefly remembered. Willis and Morris afterward sold the *Evening Mirror* and founded the *Home Journal,* one of the outstanding and most successful ventures of the time, which left a lasting mark on American magazines. Willis was known to, and familiar with most of the literary and journalistic figures of his generation. He was especially popular with women, and enjoyed their society, moving in a rather higher realm than most of the *literati.* The best portrait of N. P. Willis has been left by Poe in his sketch of the man:

> Whatever may be thought of Mr. Willis's talents, there can be no doubt about the fact that, both as an author and as a man, he has made a good deal of noise in the world — at least for an American. His literary life, in especial, has been one continual *émeute;* but then his literary character is modified or impelled in a very remarkable degree by his personal one. His success (for in point of fame, if in nothing else, he has certainly been successful) is to be attributed, one third to his mental ability and two thirds to his physical temperament — the latter goading him into the accomplishment of what the former merely gave him the means of accomplishing.
>
> At a very early age, Mr. Willis seems to have arrived at an understanding that, in a republic such as ours, the *mere* man of letters must ever be a cipher, and endeavored, accordingly, to unite the *éclat* of the

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[693] See page 492, also Woodberry, 1909, vol. I, page 287.

> *littérateur* with that of the man of fashion or of society. He 'pushed himself,' went much into the world, made friends with the gentler sex, 'delivered' poetical addresses, wrote 'scriptural' poems, traveled, sought the intimacy of noted women, and got into quarrels with notorious men. All these things served his purpose — if, indeed, I am right in supposing that he had any purpose at all. . . . Mr. Willis's career has naturally made him enemies among the envious host of dunces whom he has outstripped in the race for fame; and these his personal manner (a little tinctured with reserve, *brusquerie*, or even haughtiness) is by no means adapted to conciliate. He has innumerable warm friends, however, and is himself a warm friend. He is impulsive, generous, bold, impetuous, vacillating, irregularly energetic — apt to be lured into error, but incapable of deliberate wrong.

Mr. Willis's career was in many ways close to the ideal of that which Poe would have planned for himself. He had received so many of the rewards for which, the of course more talented Mr. Poe longed, that there seems to be some indication that the author of *The Raven* followed some of the receipts for fame that he had outlined as being in Mr. Willis's cook book. During the years that followed their acquaintance, Mr. Poe also "sought the intimacy of noted women, and got into quarrels with notorious men." If they were not noted or notorious at the time Poe met them, they soon became so.

Poe had lately been disappointed in one thing, Lowell had not finished the sketch of Poe's life in time to insert it in the September number of *Graham's* as had been arranged with Dr. Griswold. The publication of the "Life" would undoubtedly do much to enhance Poe's fame, and help him to the more important posts which he coveted. Lowell did not finish the sketch till the end of September. On a brief visit to New York, at the end of the month, he left the manuscript in a package.

> You will find the package at No. 1 Nassau Street, *upstairs*. It was addressed to the care of *C. F. Briggs*. If his name is not upon the door, you will probably see the name of 'Dougherty' or 'Jones.'[694]

Poe secured the package; he probably sent "Muddie" for it. At any rate he did not then meet Briggs, which evidently was part of Lowell's scheme to bring the two together. A few months later Poe and Briggs became partners in the poet's last journalistic venture. It was almost a month later that Poe replied:

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[694] Poe to Lowell, Elmwood, September 27, 1844.

> My dear Friend, — A host of small troubles growing from the *one* trouble of poverty . . . have hitherto prevented me from thanking you for the Biography and all the well intended flatteries it contains. . . .[695]

It was shortly after this that the Poes moved from the farm on the Bloomingdale Road (Eighty-fourth Street and Broadway) to a rooming-house at 15 Amity Street. The final revisions of *The Raven* before going to press must have taken place there. The house was of a four-story Georgian type still familiar about Greenwich Village, and the family apartment consisted of two rooms on the second floor. After the comparative freedom of the farm, it must have seemed cramped quarters. Virginia was soon ill in bed again, and during a considerable portion of the time, her husband, doubtless rendered depressed and restless by the constant confusion of a sick-room, led a more or less bachelor existence about town. Since leaving Philadelphia he had been doing little or no drinking; in the Fall of 1844 he was so poor as not to be able to buy himself tobacco.

In the middle '40s, in what is now lower Manhattan, there was a charming man resembling " a delicate miniature of Napoleon III," who kept a store at the corner of Broadway and Prince Street. Here, with a minor success, he dispensed comestibles, tobacco, mild wines, and conversation about a large old-fashioned stove which in the winter-time assumed a comfortable cherry glow. The name of the gentleman with the imperial was Gabriel Harrison. He had been born in 1818, and had studied elocution and oratory. He drew and painted acceptably; acted in minor professional parts; and took an active interest in local and national politics. He also enjoyed, and took an acceptable part in the conversation of authors and newspaper men who gathered about his stove in the corner-shop to feast on canned delicacies, jams, and port wine. In short, Mr. Harrison combined passably well the twin virtues of appearing romantic, and being a kindly man.

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[695] Poe to Lowell, October 28, 1844. In this letter Poe also refers to a scheme, which he had suggested to Lowell before leaving Philadelphia, " a scheme for protecting ourselves from the imposition of publishers by a coalition." This plan called for a stock company of a dozen leading American writers to publish a magazine " of high character." Shares to be taken by the authors at $100 each, each to furnish one article a month. Only contributions from members, or other unpaid contributors to be published. Members to be taken as far as possible from persons connected otherwise with the press. A system of black balling to be used in coöpting. Work to be anonymous.

This was another effort to launch the *Stylus*. Lowell did not reply to what he considered an impracticable plan.

In the Autumn and early Winter of 1844, when Henry Clay and James K. Polk were running for President, when the annexation of Texas, the Oregon Boundary, and the slavery dispute were in the air, Mr. Harrison was President of the *White Eagle Political Club,* and dispensing political gossip, literary chit-chat, and more substantial cheer in his corner-shop. In the midst of this campaign, he happened, one chilly evening, to look through the square panes of his small store window, and beheld a rather seedy looking gentleman with a large head, and the air of an actor, looking wistfully through the panes at the display of twist and plug tobacco. The stranger was, apparently, possessed of a countenance that it was difficult to forget. After some hesitation, he entered the store and asked the price of tobacco. Mr. Harrison himself must now be placed on the stand.

> I had told him the price, he made no move to buy, and after a few general remarks started to leave. I was struck by a certain indefinite something in his manner, by his voice, and by his fine articulation. . . . So I offered the man a piece of tobacco. He accepted, thanked me and departed. Two or three weeks later he came in again. . . .[696]

Poe was, evidently, on the second visit still out of funds. After some conversation with Mr. Harrison upon politics, into which, Poe's experience in Philadelphia had given him some insight, he wrote a campaign song for the "White Eagle Club" that began

> See the White Eagle soaring aloft to the sky,
> Wakening the brood Welkin with his loud battle cry;
> Then here's the White Eagle, full daring is he,
> As he sails on his pinions o'er valley and sea.

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[696] Reminiscences of Gabriel Harrison, *New York Times,* March, 1899. Harrison is one of the minor characters who was intimate with Poe in the New York period, from 1844 to 1847.

> I was delighted and wanted to pay him something for his trouble, but the only thing he would accept was a bag of my best coffee. As he was going I said that I should like to know his name.
>
> 'Certainly,' he answered, with a faint smile, 'Thaddeus Perley, at your service.'[696]

Mr. Poe evidently liked the coffee and the warmth of the stove, and shortly afterward returned. When he returned Fitz-Greene Halleck entered with Harrison and found Poe standing by the counter.

> 'Why, good evening, Mr. Perley,' I began. Halleck interrupted me. 'Great heavens, Poe, is this you! ' he exclaimed. 'Poe? — this is Mr. Perley,' I broke in.
>
> Poe looked at me and then at Halleck and after an instant's hesitation said, 'The fact of the matter is, Halleck, I have made this gentleman's acquaintance under the name of Perley; no harm was intended and none done. I knew that the facts would develop themselves. I have walked several miles through the sleet and rain, and, seeing a light here, thought that perhaps Mr. Harrison would let me warm up somewhat.'
>
> 'Why, of course,' I answered; 'here is the stove behind the tea boxes almost red hot. Take off your coat and dry it. What will you have, some of this old port? I spread out some crackers, an old English pineapple cheese, and we all nibbled and bent our elbows in homage to his majesty, the old port, and talked of pleasant things till my big clock struck the hour of midnight. Poe left with Halleck and stopped at his house that night.[696]

Harrison became firm friends with Poe, and saw much of him about the store, and around town. Doubtless Mrs. Clemm learned from Eddie where the bag of coffee had come from. After Poe's death, the attacks on his memory troubled Harrison considerably. He was much interested in defending and keeping alive the memory of his friend, and undertook to paint a portrait of him based on a daguerreotype "as I remember him I think in 1849 or '50." Mrs. Clemm also kept Harrison's kindness in mind, and correspondence went on between them as late as October 6, 1865.[697] The portrait is now in the rooms of the Long Island Historical Society in Brooklyn.

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[697] For the text of Mrs. Clemm's letter see appendix, page 894.

It was at this time, evidently November, 1844, that Poe went for a short while to Philadelphia, to supervise a third edition of the *Conchologist's First Book.*[698] He now removed his name from the title page and substituted the initials E. A. P. Nevertheless, the publication of the edition was followed, soon after, by a charge of plagiarism in the Philadelphia newspapers. The truth is that much more ado has been made over this charge than the facts warrant. When the whole American publishing world was engaged in one vast filibustering expedition among foreign books, to single out Poe as a " plagiarist " was ludicrous. His reply that "*All* school books are necessarily made in the same way," must be understood in the contemporary state of the American trade, and be accepted as literal and sufficient. Poe's name or initials on the title page, as an editor, did not necessarily imply that he claimed to have written the context. He was not " posing as a scientist " but trying to turn an " honest " penny or two, as hundreds of other editors of American school texts did at the time. Philadelphia was the center from which poured a flood of such materials. *Murray's Reader* from which Poe had been taught to read was a case in point. It may have been upon this trip that Poe also made arrangements for his *Marginalia* and for the review of Amelia Welby which appeared the following month in the *Philadelphia Democratic Review.*

These *Marginalia* were largely republished items from the *Pinakidia* that had appeared in the *Messenger* while he was its editor, and gleanings from his commonplace book.[699] The idea for these, the spirit, the form, and the nature of the contents was partly suggested by the similar aphorisms, epigrams, and puns in the *Letters* of Coleridge which Poe had reviewed in the *Messenger* years before.[700] Poe gave to his collection his own peculiar twist, and they deserve to be read in the body of his work, as an interesting example of his wide range of curiosity, and a witty, and sometimes profound comment on the America of his day. Poe has been assaulted for these by scholars, because he sometimes invented sources. The admiration of the pedants at their own cleverness in unearthing the " deception," and in hallooing over the fact that Poe read translations, in some cases, instead of the original texts, has thrown a shade over these sparkling little comments and penetrating asides that has dimmed the ironical sunshine of their wit.

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[698] See Chapter XIX, page 443, also notes 532, and 792.

[699] See Chapter XVII, page 403, for a fuller discussion of these items. Also see Woodberry, 1909, vol. I, pages 178, 179.

[700] A specific instance of the similarity of Coleridge's and Poe's jottings may be found in *Letters, Conversations and Recollections* of S. T. Coleridge, Harper and Brothers, 1836, letter XIII, pages 82–87. This is only one given instance. Compare these with Poe's in the *Democratic Review* for December, 1844. See note 688.

In December, 1844, Lowell visited his friend, Charles F. Briggs, at 1 Nassau Street, New York. Briggs wrote under the *nom de plume* of " Harry Franco," and was then about to undertake the issue of a new weekly to be called the *Broadway Journal*. He was looking for an able editorial assistant or partner, and to him Lowell suggested Poe. Lowell had, indeed, been a faithful friend. As early as October, 1844, he had attempted to bring Poe and Briggs together, and had also written to H. G. Colton of the *American Whig Review* recommending Poe. Poe, however, had annoyed Colton by his criticism, and he would not employ Poe.[701] Lowell's praises, however, of the author of *The Raven* may have had something to do with Colton's acceptance of the poem for the *Review*, when it was offered to him through J. A. Shea, or what is even still more likely, Colton's hostility to Poe may account for the fact that *The Raven* was offered to him anonymously, and only accepted through the good offices of a third party. At any rate, it was Lowell who was responsible for bringing Poe in touch with Briggs, and this finaly resulted in the contact with the *Broadway Journal.*

By the close of 1844, Poe was prepared to sever connections with the *Evening Mirror* and to take up his duties on the *Broadway Journal*. Mr. Willis saw him about to leave the *Evening Mirror*, with regret, and with nothing but cordiality, perhaps blent with a little natural chagrin at his leaving. Most of Poe's contributions in the *Mirror* had been purely perfunctory. His notices of Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, and his review of Longfellow's *Waif*

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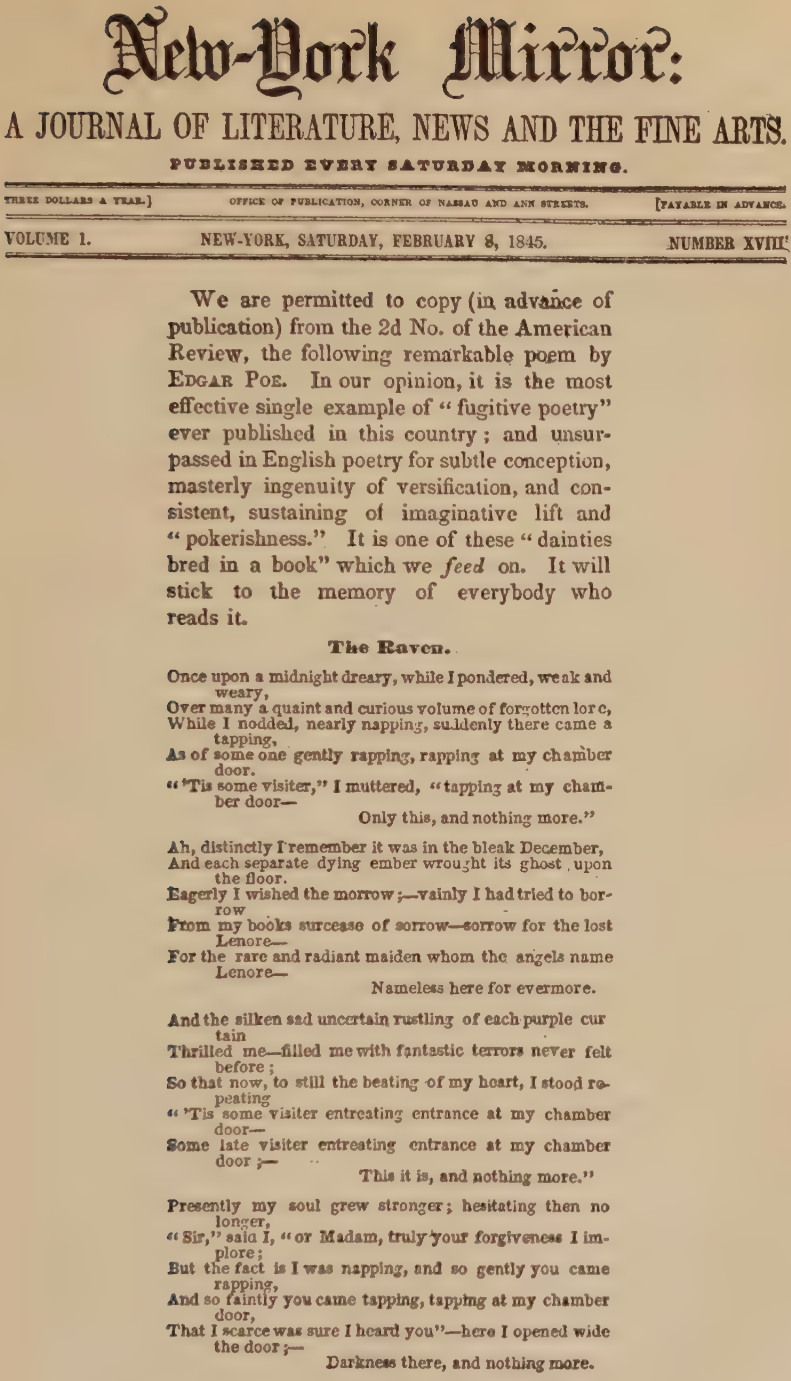
[701] Lowell to Poe, December 12, 1844. Colton was the author of a " poem " called *Tecumseh.*



New-York Mirror:
A JOURNAL OF LITERATURE, NEWS AND THE FINE ARTS.
PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY MORNING.
THREE DOLLARS A YEAR.] OFFICE OF PUBLICATION, CORNER OF NASSAU AND ANN STREETS. [PAYABLE IN ADVANCE.
VOLUME 1. NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1845. NUMBER XVIII.

We are permitted to copy (in advance of publication) from the 2d No. of the American Review, the following remarkable poem by EDGAR POE. In our opinion, it is the most effective single example of "fugitive poetry" ever published in this country; and unsurpassed in English poetry for subtle conception, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistent, sustaining of imaginative lift and "pokerishness." It is one of these "dainties bred in a book" which we *feed* on. It will stick to the memory of everybody who reads it.

The Raven.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"'Tis some visiter," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
Only this, and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had tried to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
"'Tis some visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door;—
This it is, and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door;—
Darkness there, and nothing more.

Part of the First Text of *The Raven*

Published under Poe's own name in the New York *Evening Mirror*

From the original. Courtesy of John T. Snyder, Esq., of Pelham, New York

were, perhaps, the only exceptions. In the main, the purely subordinate position which he was forced to occupy, accounts for this. He had, however, made good use of the paper to further his own interests, by personal favorable mention of himself and his friends, and before he left he arranged with Willis for the publication, in advance, and anonymously, from the pages of the *American Whig Review*, of *The Raven*. This, more than any other item of his work, enhanced his contemporary fame. It may be said without exaggeration to have insured his reputation. By his thirty-sixth birthday, January 19, 1845, Edgar Allan Poe was a famous man.

1845

Poe's connection with the *Broadway Journal* began in a rather causal way. Briggs was probably inclined to try him out a bit before making any very definite offers, so, during the early months of the New Year, Poe contributed to the new journal at the rate of $1 a column, while still maintaining his connection with Willis. The first issue of the *Broadway Journal* appeared on January 4, 1845, when Poe's main efforts were bent on getting *The Raven* published.

Poe had resumed an old friendship, dating from West Point days, with J. A. Shea, a former commissary clerk, at West Point, upon whom he relied considerably for literary advice and influence in placing his work.[702] There is no doubt that a carefully conceived campaign was worked out by Poe, for the publication of the poem, in order to obtain as wide a distribution as possible, and to create the utmost talk and controversy.

> . . . I wrote it for the express purpose of running just as I did *The Gold Bug* you know. The bird beat the bug all hollow.[703]

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[702] John Augustus Shea was not a "classmate" of Poe at West Point, but had been a clerk in the commissary. According to the son, Judge George Shea of the Marine Court of New York, Poe had been intimate with J. A. Shea while at the Point, and remembered George Shea as a child there in 1830–1. The Sheas seem to have known Poe intimately in New York about 1845. See Harrison, vol. I, pages 218, 220. Also see Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, page 114 with note of Judge Shea's personal reminiscence to Prof. Woodberry about *The Raven*. Also see this work, vol. I, Chapter XIII, page 000.

[703] Poe to Thomas, May 4, 1845. The statement must not of course be taken too literally.

The scheme of publication called for as many nearly simultaneous appearances of the poem as possible, introductory notices to insure that its excellencies, and the effects it sought to produce, should not be misunderstood, and anonymous publication in order to pique the curiosity of the public. Even during the beginning of January, 1845, at 15 Amity Street, a few days before it appeared, the process of altering it went on. The last alterations, indeed, were made so late as not to have been included.

By arrangement with N. P. Willis, probably from an advance proof of the poem as it was to appear in the *American Whig Review,* the *Evening Mirror* printed *The Raven* in advance of any other publication on January 29, 1845, " by Quarles," with an introductory paragraph that shows the inspiration of Poe and the style of Willis. This was poem's first appearance in print. It was an enormous and complete success.

Even after the publication by the *Mirror,* Poe was still at work improving his lines. In hopes to change the text before the poem appeared in the *American Whig Review,* evidently sometime about the end of January, Poe dispatched the following undated note to his friend John Augustus Shea containing some further alterations.

DEAR SHEA, — Lest I should have made some mistake in the hurry I transcribe the whole alteration. Instead of the whole stanza commencing 'Wondering at the stillness broken,' etc., substituting this:

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
'Doubtless,' said I, 'what it utters is its only stock and store
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his song one burden bore,
'Nevermore — oh Nevermore!'

At the close of the stanza preceding this, instead of 'Quoth the raven Nevermore,' substitute 'Then the bird said "Nevermore!"'

Truly yours, POE [704]

The back of the letter shows the address *J. August Shea, Esq., To be delivered as soon as he comes in.*

This shows that Poe had probably been making alterations on a text in Shea's hands, and he now sent a *résumé* of them to insure that they would be correctly included in the version about to appear in the *American Whig Review*. The letter must have reached Shea too late, for the poem appeared in the *Review* for February 1845 with the stanza uncorrected, and in an obviously inferior form, as follows:

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[704] There are several newspaper clippings that give this letter. The letter was found among Judge Shea's papers after his death. See Harrison, vol. I, page 220.

Wondering at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
'Doubtless,' said I, 'what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster — so, when Hope he would adjure,
Stern despair returned, instead of the sweet Hope he dared adjure —
That sad answer, "Nevermore!"'

This is an interesting example of the method Poe followed in perfecting his poems and also tends to throw light on the nature of "the *sweet* Hope he dared adjure." Shea, who was by way of being a bit of a literateur and a poetaster himself, was at first credited, by some, with being the author as was Willis, but a second appearance of the poem in the *Evening Mirror* attributing it to Poe, and one in the *Broadway Journal* (I.6.), and the *Southern Literary Messenger* (March, 1845), soon discovered the name of the real author.[705] Even earlier than this the *Howard District Press* of Ellicotts, Maryland, for February 15, 1845, had reported the poem with the following notice.

POETRY

We are permitted to copy (in advance of publication from the 2d No. of the American Review) the following remarkable poem by Edgar Poe. In our opinion, it is the most effective single example of 'fugitive poetry' ever published in this country, and unsurpassed in English poetry for subtle conception, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistent sustaining of imaginative lift and 'pokerishness.' It is one of these 'dainties bred in a book' which we *feed* on. It will stick to the memory of everybody who reads it. — *Mirror*.[706]

This typical bit of inspired *Americana* heralded *The Raven* all over the country. No American poem had ever achieved so instant, and so wide a success. The raven, indeed, "threatened to displace the eagle as the national bird," the busy editorial scissors of the day reduplicated it in endless publications, for a week or so everybody was demanding who the author was, and mouthing over the stanzas. Not until Mark Twain contributed his jingle of

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[705] See the reproduction of the *The Raven* from the *Evening Mirror* page 629.

[706] From an original copy of the *Howard District Press* loaned to the author by the courtesy of John T. Snyder, Esq., of Pelham, N. Y.

Punch, brothers, punch, and punch with care;
Punch in the presence of the *passengaire*. . . .

was there anything that became so rapidly and so universally familiar. With the revelation of the author's name, Poe found himself instantly famous, the object of curiosity, and the strange, romantic, diabolic, and tragic figure that he has ever since remained. It was not long before the stanzas carrying his fame spread to England.[707] Poe's manuscripts became property, and his letters now began to be sought. Autograph hunters were then ubiquitous, and the disastrous snipping instantly began.

Probably the editors, who had almost emptied their pigeon holes of his accumulated contributions, were sorry that they had not delayed longer. It happened — and for this Godey and Graham must have blessed their stars, that in their respective magazines of this same month (February, 1845) the former published *The 1002 Tale,* the voyage of Sinbad among the wonders made known by modern science, and the latter Lowell's sketch of Poe.[708]

Lowell's "Sketch" was soon republished by Willis from *Graham's,* which answered in a dignified way the new universal curiosity and questions about Poe. An authoritative glamor was thus lent to the strongly focused limelight, and Israfel found himself actually occupying the breathless heights that he had dreamed himself upon, certainly since 1824. No time was lost in striking again while the iron glowed.

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[707] Elizabeth Barrett Barrett (Mrs. Browning) to Poe, from 5 Wampole Street, London, April, 1846.

". . . Your *Raven* has produced a sensation, a 'fit horror,' here in England. Some of my friends are taken by the fear of it and some by the music. I hear of persons haunted by the "Nevermore," and one acquaintance of mine who has the misfortune of possessing a "bust of Pallas" never can bear to look at it in the twilight. I think you will like to be told that our great poet, Mr. Browning . . . was struck much by the rhythm of that poem. . . ."

[708] Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, pages 110–111.

On February 28, 1845, Poe now in the first full blossom of fame, delivered a lecture to the New York Historical Society before an audience of almost three hundred people, composed of minor society personages, his journalistic friends, authors, and a number of the *literati*. This occasion may be looked upon as his début among them, under the auspices of Willis. The lecture was much the same as that delivered at Philadelphia. It was couched in Poe's characteristic vein of hostility towards the favoritism of editors, the sins of log-rolling reviewers, and the bathos and ignorance of poetasters. His " monologue " seems to have been largely composed of the gleanings from his reviews. Bryant, Dana, the two Davidsons, Halleck, Longfellow, Mrs. Sigourney, Seba Smith; and others came in for a touching-up relieved by an occasional passage of praise. The praise, as a counterbalance to the rather caustic tone of his remarks, was somewhat exaggerated. Among those who were praised fulsomely was Mrs. Osgood. This lecture was notable for the fact that the bitter attack on Griswold which had so enlivened Poe's remarks in Philadelphia two years before was now notable by absence.

Of the impression Poe made upon this audience there remain two accounts by persons who were present, N. P. Willis, and Judge Shea. Willis said in his characteristic style:

> He becomes a desk, — his beautiful head showing like a statuary embodiment of Discrimination; his accent drops like a knife through water, and his style is so much purer and clearer than the pulpit commonly gets or requires that the effect of what he says, besides other things, pampers the ear.

Shea's account is more intimate and somewhat less in the lady's book vein:

> It was my good fortune to be present when Poe and my father read and recited to each other. I remember distinctly Poe's rendering of *Florence Vane* (a poem by J. A. Shea) and *Annabel Lee,* and more than once his own *Raven*. His reading of *The Raven* left upon the mind a very different impression from that which it inspires in print. It was a weird, rapturous invocation as to an actual presence. Poe was among the first of the authors that took to reading and lecturing as a professional occupation. I heard him in the society library in New York in

> March 1845. He told me that he recalled me in my early childhood . . . at West Point. . . . The portraits of Poe represent him with a mustache. I do not recall that he wore one when I saw him. He had a graceful walk, a beautiful olive complexion, was strikingly handsome, but had a weak chin.[702]

Outwardly at least, Poe and Griswold had now resumed diplomatic relations, although the old rancor still burned underneath. Since coming to New York, Poe had met Griswold at the office of the *Tribune*, where the occasion had been somewhat strained. "I could make no advances when we met," writes Poe, "although I longed to do so."[709] This longing was occasioned by the fact that Griswold was getting out through Carey & Hart, in Philadelphia, his *Prose Writers of America*, and revising his poetical anthology for another edition. Poe was anxious to be included in the first, and to revise some of his poems in the second. On January 10, 1845, he resumed correspondence with Griswold with those ends in view. Fearful of what Griswold's comment might be he says:

> . . . but with your present feelings you can hardly do me justice in any criticism, and I shall be glad if you will simply say after my name: 'Born 1811; published *Tales of the Grotesque and the Arabesque* in 1834; has resided laterally in New York.'[710]

The replies, however, were ostensibly cordial, and a *rapprochement* ensued. Griswold sent Poe a package of books, and Poe sent Griswold his prose manuscripts and verse corrections. Both of these men were too necessary to each other to be able to remain literary enemies. Poe was now too important to be ignored or mentioned slightingly, and he, on his part, realized the necessity of the friendship of the anthologist. Griswold seems to have pretty well won Poe's trust by his advances, and to have made the most of it. The Reverend Doctor, however, had by no means forgiven Poe. At the same time that he was writing to Poe assuring him of his liberal attitude and esteem, he took the opportunity to pour scandal into the ears of Briggs with all the rest of Poe's Philadelphia history. In January, Briggs wrote to Lowell:

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[709] Poe to Griswold, New York, January 16, 1845.
[710] Poe to Griswold, New York, January 10, 1845.

> I like Poe exceedingly well; Mr. Griswold has told me shocking bad stories about him which his whole demeanor contradicts.[711]

The causes of Griswold's hatred of Poe, for such it was, probably lay deep within certain idiosyncrasies of the Doctor's nature. He was one who took violent likes or prejudices, even with men, as his friend, C. G. Leland, testifies:

> To the end of his life I was always with him a privileged character, and could take, if I chose, the most extraordinary liberties, though he was one of the most irritable and vindictive men I ever met if he fancied he was in any way too familiarly treated.[712]

Griswold also thoroughly disliked Poe, for very ordinary human reasons, and undertook to ruin him in so far as in him lay. For professional reasons he dissembled this, and succeeded in gaining Poe's confidence, who thus delivered himself into the hands of the enemy.[713] That Griswold and Poe were rivals for Mrs. Osgood's favor is by no means a remote possibility. The suggestion has been ably defended, if not conclusively proved.

Despite the kind offices of the good Doctor, Briggs' estimate of Poe was at first favorable, and by the middle of January, 1845, the author of *The Raven* had secured a one third interest in the *Broadway Journal*. That paper announced him very early in March as having become one of the three editors, *i.e.*, Briggs, Poe, and Bisco. Henry S. Watson filled the post of musical critic, in which department he wielded considerable authority and prestige — at that time. Poe, it seems, had rather forced the issue by insisting that his own name would bring additional subscribers. At the time of Poe's joining on, Briggs wrote to Lowell:

> Poe is only an assistant to me, and will in no manner interfere with my own way of doing things.

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[711] Briggs to Lowell, New York, January 6, 1845.

[712] The quotation is from C. G. Leland's *Memoirs*, 1893. See also Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, appendix VI, *Griswold's World*. From Leland's *Memoirs*.

[713] "One day I found in (Griswold's) desk, which he had committed to me, a great amount of further material collected to Poe's discredit. I burnt it all up at once, and told the Doctor what I had done, and scolded him well into the bargain. He took it all very amiably." (See note 712.) The "material" was evidently letters from various ladies of the *literati*. This was after Poe's death.

In this estimate, Mr. Charles F. Briggs was profoundly mistaken. From the time of Poe's arrival at the office of the *Broadway Journal,* Mr. Briggs was forced to play a very second fiddle in what was by no means an orchestral harmony.

The Little Longfellow War was now transferred from the columns of the *Mirror* to those of the *Broadway Journal.* For the first time, Poe found himself at liberty to write without any softening influence from above, and charges of plagiarism flew about without let. Even Lowell came in for a passing " charge " which was unfounded, this, under the circumstances of his kindness, can only be regarded as an " honest stab in the back." Plagiarism had become a monomania with Poe.[714]

The publication of *The Raven,* with the consequent success and adulation which it brought, together with the unfounded hopes for the new journal, produced in Poe an air of feverish excitement which, about the Spring of 1845, begins to become evident in his actions and writings. He was experiencing, too, a social contact with many people, and especially with women, more generally than for years past. During the months spent in New York in 1844, he had been abstemious, as the united testimony of the Brennans, Willis, and Mrs. Barhyte, who saw him constantly about the office of the *Mirror,* shows. He now once more began to drink, and more heavily than ever before. March, 1845, may be regarded as the beginning of the final steep slope that pitched ever more steeply, with only a few interludes, to the end.

Briggs almost immediately became dissatisfied and, from now on, began a series of irritated and rather weak complaints to Lowell.[715] Lack of sufficient capital to assure his position, and a quarrel with John Bisco, another partner in the enterprise, began rapidly to press Briggs out of his " control." Mr. Poe's pressure was evidently very real, and, from the time he took up his duties at the desk, he was evidently regarded by all those connected with the publication as "the boss."

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[714] The subject has been treated here as a whole for convenience, although out of the order of the narrative. The lessening importance of the Longfellow controversy has led to its being treated in a very limited way in the text.

[715] The Briggs-Lowell correspondence during 1845. See Woodberry, 1909, vol. II; Prof. Woodberry was given access to the entire Lowell-Poe-Briggs, etc. correspondence by James Russell Lowell.

Poe had been going about town in the Winter of 1845 with a number of theatrical people. His double rôle of dramatic critic on the *Journal,* and author of *The Raven* gave him considerable theatrical prestige. Among those whom he had persuaded to recite *The Raven* in public was James E. Murdock, a genuinely notable actor of the time with a majestic voice. What Alec, the office boy, thought when Mr. Murdock read Mr. Poe's *Raven* is on record:

> It was one cold day in winter, when everybody in the . . . *Journal* office from myself on up was busily at work, that Poe came into the office, accompanied by the great actor named Murdock. They went to Poe's desk, and Mr. Poe summoned the entire force, including myself, about him. There was less than a dozen of us and I was the only boy.[716]

Doubtless Poe had in his mind a similar reading some years before at *Graham's,* when, out of charity, the hat was passed and the poem voted a failure. He was now having a magnificent revenge, having *The Raven* read to the employees of his own magazine as the most famous poem in America. There was balm in that. The little crowd of employees, wondering at the sudden halt of the clanking hand presses, gathered, perhaps anxiously, about the desk and the two men standing there, who were both professional tragedians.

> When we were all together, Poe drew the manuscript of *The Raven* from his pocket and handed it to Murdock. He had called us to hear the great elocutionist read his newly written poem . . . with the combined art of two masters I was entranced. It is the most cherished memory of my life that I heard the immortal poem read by one whose voice was like a chime of silver bells.[716]

It is this trivial incident, obscurely preserved by an ex-office boy, which more than any other has accidentally captured and preserved the symbol of Poe's literary life. There is the background of the magazine office and the presses; the editor's desk; the drama, personified by Mr. Murdock, but introduced as usual by Mr. Poe; the production of the manuscript; its effect upon an ignorant audience; and the one intelligent heart that remembered long, long after the boss of the whole pathetic little show was dead.

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[716] Alexander T. Crane (once office boy on the *Broadway Journal*) in the *Sunday World-Herald.* Omaha, Nebraska, July 13, 1902.

One could *almost* laugh at the " great " elocutionist — at the vacancy of printers' faces, signed with ink, grinning, startled, gaping, white under the black — as a great dark bird, that somehow lived in Mr. James E. Murdock's voice, suddenly swooped into the grey office, filling it with diabolical repetition of croakings, and musical mutterings. Then, for a moment, they were all sad lovers; grieving; walking in the forever of a minute, in the black moonlight that had been poured out upon them from the soul of the pale, tired-looking man standing by the proof-sodden desk, his mouth twisted with the pain of an impossible triumph.

Yet, if one is still intelligent enough to admire the Mystery Play of the Imagination more than the Punch and Judy Show of the educated mind, then it is a question if, after all, one *can* laugh even at Mr. James E. Murdock, who was merely a means to an end. Just as poor little White of the *Messenger*, and Billy-buffoon Burton, and Graham — and all the rest had been. But then there is Mr. Poe.

Why does Poe continue to remain? There has been a deal of effort to explain him away on moralistic, psychological, medical, and critical grounds. The shelf grows larger every year, yet publishers continue to find a lucrative sale in his collected works, and the price of his rare first editions mounts astonishingly. All this is indicative of the fact that there continues to be found in Poe a permanency of values. These values lie in the realm of the imagination. Poe was able to create there something new and something unique. It is a world never heard of before, peopled with characters who breathe only in its atmosphere, beings moved by motives and passions wholly sufficient for the sphere to which they have been called, hitherto unheard of and unsuspected, but dying like spiritual fish when they are removed, even for a brief examination, from the water of dreams into the air of reality. This is the great glory and the triumph of their creator. A new Nowhere was added by him to the empire of literature. Once created, such a kingdom lies beyond the strictures and the cavilings of the pedantic, the literal, and the moral. There is no use discussing its right to be. It already exists. Not to visit it because of critical quarantines or moral taboos, is to remain unaware of one of the most fascinating and terrifying Nowheres on the map of literature. It is a comparatively small tract to be sure, this Island of Poe, but it is quite permanently a part of the imaginative world. " This island," says the professors, " does not rest on a sound scholarly basis." " There is a terrible bone-rending ogre who lives there with dead ladies," say the psychologists. " No realism here," exclaim the critics, " no resemblance to anything in the real world! " That, indeed, is a serious charge from sovereign Reality who makes the cripple of Imagination, whom he keeps as a jester, hop as directed.

> . . . the king loved his *practical* jokes, and took pleasure in forcing Hop-Frog to drink and (as the king called it) ' to be merry.'
>
> ' Come here, Hop-Frog,' said he as the jester . . . entered the room; ' swallow this bumper to the health of your absent friends . . . and then let us have the benefit of your invention. We want characters — *characters*, man, — something novel — out of the way. We are wearied with this everlasting sameness. . . .
>
> ' I will equip you as ourang-outangs,' proceeded the dwarf, ' leave all that to me. The resemblance shall be so striking, that the company of masqueraders will take you for real beasts. . . .'[717]

The terrible revenge which the enslaved and debauched Imagination took upon his tormentors, may be read in *Hop-Frog*. He escapes with " Fancy " who:

> . . . had been the accomplice of her friend in his fiery revenge . . . together, they effected their escape to their own country; for neither was seen again.[717]

The crowd is left gaping at the hideous remains.

Lecturing was just then beginning to be especially popular, and

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[717] From Poe's *Hop-Frog*. The allegory of this story seems to have been generally overlooked.

Poe intended to take advantage of the opportunity to deliver his lecture of February 27 before another audience, about the end of March. Evidently the employees about the *Journal* were much impressed by their new editor for the office boy attended and left an account:

> The night set for the second lecture was a very bad one. It stormed incessantly, with mingled rain and hail and sleet. In consequence there were scarcely a dozen persons present when Poe came upon the platform and announced that, under the circumstances, the lecture could not be given.[716]

The entrance money was returned at the door, but Poe was bitterly disappointed.

> I was one of those present, as Poe had given me a complimentary ticket to the lecture, and badly as I was disappointed, I could see upon his face that my master was much more so. It was a little thing, it is true, but he was a man easily upset by little things.[716]

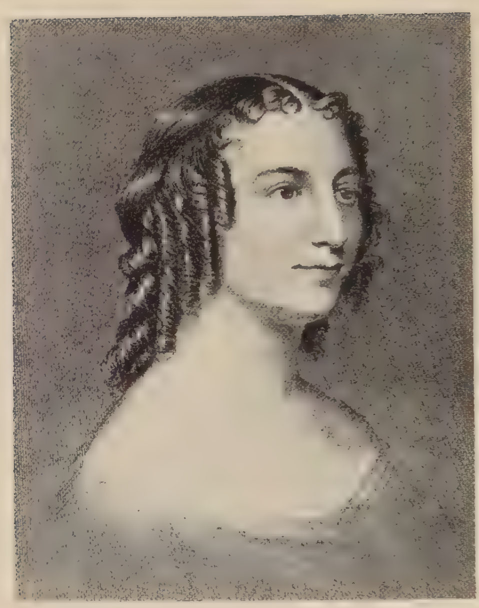
Poe came to the office next morning so much under the influence that he arrived leaning on the arm of a friend.[716]

He was, at that time, still living at 15 Amity Street. Virginia was now obviously beyond hope. It was only a matter of time. As we have seen, this thought was peculiarly terrifying to Poe. He must now, of necessity, have begun sincerely to consider the future. Sometime during the Spring, Willis introduced him to the poetess, Mrs. Frances Osgood, whom he had praised in his lecture. The occurrence may be said to have marked the beginning of a series of hectic, " platonic " friendships that succeeded and over-lapped each other while Virginia continued alive, and led, later on, to the strange wooings and retreats which followed her death. The renewal of associations with women, with the consequent excitement which ensued, was from now on a large factor in the course of Poe's rapid disintegration. Mrs. Osgood's was the first affair, and she may be said to have kindled a fatal flame that fed on itself.

Willis lived in rather sumptuous style at the *Astor House* where he entertained the *literati* and gathered about him, in the parlors there, the group of which he was the central figure and the literary

Frances Sargent Osgood

From an old engraving



Mrs. Anna Cora Mowatt

Authoress of "Fashion"

"Her figure is slight, even fragile. Her face is a remarkably fine one, and of that precise character best adapted to the stage. The forehead is, perhaps, the least prepossessing feature, although it is by no means an unintellectual one. Hair light auburn, in rich profusion, and always arranged with exquisite taste. The eyes are gray, brilliant and expressive, without being full. The nose is well formed, with the Roman curve, and indicative of energy. This quality is also shown in the somewhat excessive prominence of the chin. The mouth is large, with brilliant and even teeth and flexible lips, capable of the most instantaneous and effective variations of expression. A more radiantly beautiful smile it is quite impossible to conceive."

E. A. P.

From a portrait owned by "The Players", New York City nabob. Mrs. Osgood had been much flattered by Poe's praise, as he meant her to be. She describes their meeting in the Spring of '45 after the publication of *The Raven,* after Poe had sent the poem to her by Willis with a request for her " judgment " and the favor of an interview.

> I shall never forget the morning when I was summoned to the drawing-room by Mr. Willis to receive him. With his proud beautiful head erect, his dark eyes flashing with the electric light of feeling and of thought, a peculiar, an inimitable blending of sweetness and hauteur in his expression and manner, he greeted me, calmly, gravely, almost coldly, yet with so marked an earnestness that I could not help being deeply impressed by it. From that moment until his death we were friends, although we met only during the first year of our acquaintance.

Mrs. Osgood lost no time in cultivating a romantic editor. On April 5, in the *Broadway Journal,* " Israfel " was invoked. He replied with some verses *To F* . . . She, of course, did not know that they were being made to serve a second time, having years before been addressed to Eliza White in the *Messenger.* Mrs. Osgood, however, could have had little to complain of, for she also sent to Griswold a valentine in which the names of Osgood and Griswold were interwoven. Poe saw a good deal of her. The intimacy grew, and eventually aroused the wrath of a suspicious family. Mrs. Clemm, and Virginia who was apparently resigned, or incapable of being jealous, encouraged it, at first.

Frances Sargent Osgood (born Locke) was the wife of an American painter, Samuel S. Osgood, of some minor ability, who painted the portrait of Poe now in the possession of the New York Historical Society. She had early been much given to the scribbling of sentimental verses that, then and later, achieved wide magazine publication, and in the late '30s, while on a visit to England with her husband who was studying there, she had published a volume of poems that had a second American edition in 1842. Her verse was compounded of a bombastic rhetoric, sentimentality, and a certain " grace " for which Poe chiefly praised her.

" She has occasional passages of true imagination," says Poe, " but scarcely the gloomy vigorous, and sustained ideality of

Mrs. Maria Brook — or even in general, the less ethereal ideality of Mrs. Welby" — by which illustrious company, Mrs. Osgood may be placed.

> In character she is ardent, sensitive, impulsive — the very soul of truth and honor; a worshipper of the beautiful, with a heart so radically artless as to seem abundant in art; unusually admired, respected and beloved. In person she is about the medium height, slender even to fragility, graceful whether in action or repose; complexion usually pale, hair black and glossy; eyes a clear, luminous grey, large, and with singular capacity for expression.[718]

Such was the little woman who now began to exercise upon Poe a charm of sufficiently definite nature to cause a scandal, a copious flood of praise from the "great critic," and compromising correspondence.

Poe was now at the apex of his contemporary fame. *The Raven* was on everybody's lips, and the Longfellow War making a considerable noise. As dramatic critic of the *Broadway Journal* he was now much at the theater. One night at the Park, an actor who knew him, saw him sitting in the audience. Into the lines of his part as the scene progressed, he interpolated, "Nevermore, Nevermore." "A thrill ran through the audience and a profound sensation was produced." Nothing shows the effect of the poem on the public more distinctly than this. Poe afterward referred to this event, which may be said to have marked the *ne plus ultra* of his reputation, "not with vanity, but with large, supernal eyes, as if the dirge were an ever present echo." The actor may possibly have been Murdock.

In 1845, in Flatbush there lived a rather remarkable woman, Mrs. Anna Cora Mowatt,[719] who has the distinction of being the first American lady to risk, and retain her social standing by an intimate connection with the stage. She was, in her own field, a portent of the movement for the emancipation of women of which Mrs. Oakes Smith was another example, a movement that in the middle forties was just beginning to get well under way. The "lady-like" field of literature was naturally the first area in which the bounds of convention first began to give way. One could write poetry and publish it, and still retain one's reputation. The advocates of political rights were still considered to be dangerous, and *Godey's Lady's Book* had published in 1844 a solemn warning, from the pure pen of the author of *Ten Nights in a Bar Room*, meant to admonish the sex. It was noticeable, however, that no less a person than Park Benjamin had rejoined on the other side! In a certain sense, the hectic salons of the *literati* were merely one of the phenomena of feminine discontent of the period, of the inevitable repercussion of democracy, and the social flux of society in a new republic, where the martial and feudal tradition of womanly inferiority no longer held sway. In this movement New York, Concord, and Boston were at the forefront.

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[718] This brief sketch of Mrs. Osgood is taken from the *Diary* of Elizabeth Oakes Smith and from Poe's notice of her in the *Literati Papers*.

[719] Material for the remarks on Mrs. Mowatt, Edwin Forrest and the contemporary American stage has been gathered from a wide variety of sources — chiefly Poe; Oberholtzer's *Literary History of Philadelphia; The Romance of the American Stage,* M. C. Crawford, Little, Brown and Co., 1925; Letters of Forrest loaned to the author; contemporary dramatic notices, etc., etc.

In 1845, Mrs. Mowatt defied all tradition by writing, staging, and successfully presenting a play. It was a social satire on the manners, and the sentimentality of the period, called *Fashion*, and it marked a distinctly new trend in the traditions of the American theater.

For the most part, nothing but English plays had been produced in America, rhetorical melodramas, at the present, impossible to imagine. These had been somewhat relieved by "spectacles" and mellifluous tableaux which, about this time, began to go out of fashion by legal pressure:

Edwin Forrest had appeared in an American play by Stone, a young Philadelphian. *Metamora, or the Last of the Wampanoags* was the characteristic title. This was an Indian play in which Forrest appeared as King Philip to such effect that, in Boston, some Indians who attended it become so excited that they stood up and chanted a dirge at the death of the chief. *The Broker of Bogota* was another favorite. These plays of Forrest "represented the *alter ego* of the namby pamby magazines." The star strode and strutted through them, "screeching and howling and tearing passions to tatters" watched by a breathless audience of "faint ladies, spruce clerks, spindling fops, and perfumed dandies . . . well nigh thrown into convulsions over their favorite's collossal poses, gestures, and thunderbolts of speech." Into this dramatic *mélange* Mrs. Mowatt injected a decidedly more civilized note with her comedy of manners and social satire *Fashion.* The patronizing audiences who saw this play in a recent modern revival did not seem to realize that it was meant, even at the time of its conception, as a satire.

The opening night was March 24, 1845. The play was largely and importantly attended. Many of Poe's friends among the *literati* knew Mrs. Mowatt. Epes Sargent had prevailed on Simpson, the manager of the Park Theater, to accept the comedy, and Poe attended for several nights running in order to do it justice in his review, first writing to Mrs. Mowatt to obtain a manuscript of the play. This was sent to him.[720] The review of *Fashion* appeared March 20, in the *Broadway Journal.*

> The play is not without merit. It may be commended especially for its simplicity of plot. What the Spanish playwrights mean by dramas of intrigue, are the worst acting dramas in the world; the intellect of an audience can never safely be fatigued by complexity. The necessity for verbose explanation, however, on the part of Trueman, at the close of the play, is in this regard a serious defect. A *dénouement* should in all cases be taken up with action — with nothing else. Whatever cannot be explained by such action should be communicated at the opening of the story.
>
> In the plot, however estimable for simplicity, there is of course not a particle of originality of invention. Had it, indeed, been designed as a burlesque upon the arrant conventionality of stage incidents in general, it might have been received as a palpable hit. There is not an event, a character, a jest, which is not a well-understood thing, a matter of course, a stage-property time out of mind. The general tone is adopted from *The School for Scandal,* to which, indeed, the whole composition bears just such an affinity as the shell of a locust to the locust that tenants it — as the spectrum of a Congreve rocket to the Congreve rocket itself. In the management of her imitation, nevertheless, Mrs. Mowatt has, I think, evinced a sense of theatrical effect or

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[720] Anna Cora Mowatt to Poe: "Thursday evening" — (1845) "Edgar A. Poe, Esq., — (I regret that I have not a more legible manuscript of the Comedy (*Fashion*) to submit to your perusal, or even one made containing all the corrections made at the suggestion of critical advisers. . . .) Your criticisms will be prized . . ." etc. Griswold collection.

point which may lead her, at no very distant day, to compose an exceedingly taking, although it can never much aid her in composing a very meritorious drama. *Fashion,* in a word, owes what it had of success to its being the work of a lovely woman who had already excited interest, and to the very commonplaceness or spirit of conventionality which rendered it readily comprehensible and appreciable by the public proper. It was much indebted, too, to the carpets, the ottomans, the chandeliers and the conservatories, which gained so decided a popularity for that despicable mass of inanity, the *London Assurance* of Boucicault.

Resemblances of characters in the play to well-known figures about town were traced by the audience, and the lady playwright was under the necessity of explaining that "Mrs. Tiffany," her heroine, the wife of a newly rich business man, was not meant as a caricature of any individual, as some of the critics alarmingly claimed. *Fashion* was a great success, and went on a wide tour "down east" and to Philadelphia.

Matters at the office of the *Journal* were not going any too easily for Poe. Briggs was in financial straights, and was evidently much shocked by Poe's flirtation with Mrs. Osgood, which now began to be talked of among the *literati* confirming Griswold's tittle-tattle of the Saratoga episode, but he was even more shocked by the conversation of the "Raven" himself. Mr. Poe had no faith in reformers. He regarded the Bible as a rigmarole. He was a monomaniac on the subject of plagiarism. Worst of all, he sided with Bisco, the other partner, and was undoubtedly preparing to continue the *Journal* himself with that gentleman when Mr. Briggs, as it now seemed likely, should withdraw.[715] There is all the evidence here of a very conventional, and unimaginative gentleman being greatly shocked by hearing, for the first time, the conversation of a genius who didn't give a damn. Poe's lordly airs about the office were also hard to bear, and the worshipful attitude towards him of office boys and the staff. Above all, Mr. Poe was irreligious which, at that time, was so unusual as to be thought a species of madness.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that the now great poet's growing egotism was harder and harder to stand, and that Mr. Briggs' *Journal* having insulted many of Mr. Briggs' friends, by the pen of Poe, at the cost of Mr. Briggs' slender capital, made a sore issue. Briggs would like to have hauled Poe's name down, but was told that Mr. Poe was even then considering retiring to the country to write, so Briggs might do as he liked.

Besides, Poe *was* doing most of the work. Columns of articles on Street Paving, Secrets of the Magazine Prison House, Anastatic Printing, replies to "Outis," Hirst's *Coming of the Mammoth,* the *Antigone,* and what not, continued to pour from the pen of the man with the big head, besides review after review, from *The Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* to Mr. Lord's *Poems.* On May 4, Poe wrote to Thomas:

> In the hope that you have not yet *quite* given me up as gone to Texas, or elsewhere, I sit down to write you a few words. . . . The fact is, that being seized of late with a fit of industry, I put so many irons in the fire all at once that I have been quite unable to get them out. For the last three or four months I have been working fourteen or fifteen hours a day, — hard at it all the time. I never knew what it was to be a slave before.
>
> And yet, Thomas, I have made no money. I am as poor now as ever I was in my life — except in hope, which is by no means bankable. I have taken a third pecuniary interest in the *Broadway Journal,* and for everything I have written for it have been, of course, so much out of my pocket. In the end, however, it will pay me well — at least the prospects are good. Say to Dow for me that there never has been a chance for my repaying him, without putting myself to greater inconvenience than he himself would have wished to subject me to, had he known the state of the case.[721] Nor am I able to pay him now. The Devil himself was never so poor. Say to Dow, also that I am sorry he has taken to dunning in his old age — it is a diabolical practice, altogether unworthy 'a gentleman and a scholar' — to say nothing of the Editor of the *Madisonian.* . . .
>
> There is no one in the world I would rather see this moment than yourself; and many are the long talks we have about you and yours. Virginia and Mrs. Clemm beg to be remembered to you in the kindest terms.

Besides all this, there were visitors from out of town, parties with the *literati,* and with Harrison, Shea, and bachelor friends.

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[721] This refers to the $8, still unpaid, which Poe had borrowed from Dow in Washington, see Chapter XXI, page 561. Dow was in sore straits, having lost his government position, and in debt for the *Madisonian* which he edited.

Poe took Virginia to call on Mrs. Oakes Smith, and he was also in constant pursuit of Mrs. Osgood. He was having his portrait painted by Osgood, arranging a volume of *The American Parnassus,* and his collected poems for Wiley & Putnam, corresponding with Chivers and Horne, answering letters about *The Raven,* and much, too much about town.

Sometime in May, Poe and his family moved to 195 Broadway where they occupied a back room on the third-story in a house that had seen better days in the time of a rich merchant, and was now by way of being a tenement. Poe was now drinking a good deal, and his health was consequently precarious. The new lodgings were a symptom of his almost complete poverty. It was there that Lowell came to see him. Lowell was on his way home from Philadelphia, where, during his honeymoon, he had stopped, and spent a few months writing for the *Pennsylvania Freeman,* while living at 127 Arch Street where the Poes had stayed in 1839. Lowell and his wife left Philadelphia in a carriage with Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Davis, Lucretia Mott's daughter, about the end of May, journeyed through Chester County and came to call on Poe in New York. He had chosen an unfortunate time.

Poe was soggy with drink "not tipsy — but as if he had been holding his head under a pump to cool it." Poe was evidently rancorous and sarcastic. Mrs. Clemm never left the room, but evidently felt great chagrin, for five years later she wrote an apologetic letter about the interview to Lowell. "The day you saw him in New York *he was not himself.*" Lowell described Poe as being small, with a chalky, clammy complexion, fine dark eyes under broad temples, and with a brow that receded sharply back from the eyes. In manner, he was very formal and pompous. Poe, on his part, was disappointed in Lowell and wrote Chivers that he did not fulfill his idea of an intellectual man — "He was not half the noble-looking person that I expected to see." [722]

It was probably about this period that Mr. Saunders, the librarian of the Astor Library, one day met Poe on Broadway.

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[722] Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, page 137–138. Also prints the letter to Lowell from Mrs. Clemm about this visit, dated Lowell, March 9, 1850.

It was sometime after the publication of *The Raven*. Poe, he said, was effusive and maudlin, and declared that he was going to read *The Raven* before Queen Victoria and the royal family. Mr. Saunders says he knew Poe quite well at that time, and that, after he had been drinking, which happened frequently, he would talk of nothing but himself, his work, and the jealousy of other writers. It is now that the first evidence of a persecution delusion is found.

> The next time I saw him he was very much depressed, and was suffering from a fit of melancholia to which he was subject. *He spoke of a conspiracy among the other authors of America to belittle his genius and to smother* his work. 'But posterity shall judge,' he said, with a gleam of pride in his eye. 'Future generations will be able to sift the gold from the dross, and then *The Raven* will be beheld, shining above them all, as a diamond of the purest water.'

The progress of enlarged ego, and the beginning of delusion of persecution, are here plain. Three years later they were at times complete.

About the beginning of July, Dr. Thomas Holley Chivers of Oakey Grove, Georgia, came to New York to arrange for the publication of a volume of poetry called *The Lost Pleiad and Other Poems*. Poe was very anxious to secure the aid of Chivers in supplying capital for the *Stylus,* which was still on his mind. The correspondence between the two had been affectionate, and dealt with transcendental and metaphysical subjects. Chivers had a great admiration for Poe. One day he found Poe in a sadly intoxicated state on Nassau Street, and was helping him home when they met the editor of the *Knickerbocker,* Lewis Graylord Clark. Poe thought some wrong had been done him by Clark and threatened to attack him despite all that his friend could do. Understanding the situation, Mr. Clark bowed himself out of the scrape. Poe was to have given a reading before the literary societies at New York University apparently that evening, but continued on a spree and could not be found when Chivers called next day. The following morning Mrs. Clemm told Chivers that Poe was ill, probably to explain his absence. After some delay, the Georgia poet gained access to his room and found him in bed reading

Macaulay. Chivers continued for some time in New York, and was much with Poe who noticed his book in the *Broadway Journal* in August. The capital for the *Stylus*, however, was naturally enough under the circumstances, not forthcoming. It was the old story over again.

In June, Briggs had withdrawn from the *Broadway Journal* and left its fate, which was never in doubt, in the hands of Poe. The *Journal* had become notorious for the inveterate character of the Longfellow war, and its criticisms. Of these Longfellow himself remarked:

> The harshness of his criticisms (Poe's) I have never attributed to anything but the irritation of a sensitive nature, shaped by some indefinite sense of wrong.[723]

Longfellow was essentially correct and generous in this. The indefinite sense of wrong was fast becoming a persecution complex. Briggs had hoped to get rid of Poe by the end of the first volume of the *Journal* in July. He had a friend upon whom he counted to buy out Bisco, the other partner, but the latter demanded an exorbitant sum, and scared off the prospective purchaser. Briggs then withdrew, persuading Bisco to carry on the *Journal* himself, Briggs retaining his claims. At this juncture the paper suspended for a week. Poe then went on a drunken spree and, of course, claimed that Briggs was insulting him and not using him fairly, although he owed him money. The upshot of it was that, in order not to lose everything, the sadly burdened Mr. Briggs allowed Poe and Bisco to continue the sheet from which Briggs now withdrew from any active participation.

The first number of the second volume in July described Poe as the sole editor, and one third proprietor. Poe now made every effort to buy out the interests of the other partners and, in order to do this, involved himself in debt by floating notes with his friends about town, Horace Greeley being one of the unfortunate indorsers. He also implored William Poe, J. P. Kennedy, Chivers, Fitz-Greene Halleck, and probably N. P. Willis, towards the end of the year, to save him. The bulk of the notes came due the first of the New Year; many had already been renewed, and Poe was unable to continue. The *Journal* increased its advertisements, but fell-off in subscriptions. Kennedy wrote a kindly and cordial note, but could or would not assist his protégé with funds. It was the last letter that passed between them. From midsummer on, the *Broadway Journal* was simply approaching its end, its life blood depending upon timely transfusions of borrowed funds. Poe was frantic at seeing his longed for opportunity slowly slipping from his grasp, and continued to labor, to correspond, and to hope to the last. His drinking had now again undermined what little physical reserve he had. He was ill, poor, in debt, and despondent. Another period of collapse was approaching.

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[723] *Southern Literary Messenger*, November, 1849.

Some further indications of Poe's many activities at this time, and of the course of his difficulties have recently come to light. About the time he had left the *Mirror,* in April, 1844, Poe had made a special arrangement with B. B. Minor, the editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger,* to publish *The Raven* with an especial type display. At the same time it seems he had undertaken to supply the *Messenger* with monthly installments of a *critique raisonnée* on forthcoming foreign and American books. Bisco, probably through Poe, had, at the same time, made arrangements with Minor to take subscriptions in the South for the *Broadway Journal.* A dispute arose about these over the amount. Bisco had paid Poe his share, apparently without authority, and no returns were made to the *Messenger.* The matter was never accommodated, and Poe ceased to contribute to his old paper until J. R. Thompson, a new editor, took the chair some years later.[724]

In June, 1845, while Poe was still living at 195 Broadway, he was visited by R. H. Stoddard, who gives us an intimate glimpse of the author of *The Raven* that is rather illuminating. Stoddard was, at that time, a young, unknown poet who had been inspired by an Englishman, one Major Richardson.

> It struck my fancy, ineffective as it was, for I was then under the spell of Keats. Yes, I was a poet also, and since my master had written an *Ode on a Grecian Urn,* I must needs write a companion piece. Like

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[724] J. H. Whitty gives this in his *Memoir* to the *Complete Poems.*

all early writing it was crude, but there was promise in it. I worked over it, made a copy of it, and sent it to the editor of the *Broadway Journal,* in which I hoped it might appear. A week or two passed, and as it did not appear, I went to ascertain its fate. It was a hot afternoon in June, and with the direction furnished me by the publisher (*Briggs*), I sought the residence of Mr. Poe. He received me with the courtesy habitual with him when he was himself, and gave me to understand that my ode would appear in the next number of his journal. The next number appeared, but not my ode. It was mentioned however, in 'Notices to Correspondents,' and dismissed with the curt remark that the editor declined to publish it unless he could be assured of its authenticity. . . .

To the author of the lines on the 'Grecian Flute.' We fear that we have mislaid the poem.'

And a month later, this: '*We doubt the originality of the "Grecian Flute," for the reason that it is too good at some points to be so bad at others. Unless the author can reassure us, we decline it. . . .*

. . . Of course I called within a few days to authenticate my trifle. It was a forenoon, and a very hot one, in July. I plodded down from the east side of the town, southwardly, westwardly, through Lewis Street, Division Street, and Chatham Street, until I reached Clinton Hall, on the southwest corner of Beekman and Nassau Streets. It was then past noon, and of course the potent editor of the *Broadway Journal* had gone out to his luncheon, with Briggs, or English, or some other Bohemian with whom he had not yet fallen out. 'Not in, sir,' ejaculated the fatuous publisher. I walked away, and cooled myself by wandering in and out of the Park, in the intolerable July afternoon. Returning with my blood at fever-heat, I was informed that Poe was in his *sanctum.* He was awakened either by myself or his publisher, and was in a very stormy mood. When summoned back to earth he was slumbering uneasily in a very easy chair. He was irascible, surly, and in his cups.

'Mr. Poe,' I ventured to remark meekly, 'I saw you two or three weeks ago, and I read in your paper that you doubted by ability to write —'

'I know,' he answered, staring up wildly. 'You never wrote the Ode to which I lately referred. You never —'

But the reader may imagine the rest of this unfortunate sentence. I was comminated, and threatened with condign personal chastisement. I left quickly, but was not, as I remember, downcast. On the contrary, I was complimented. The great American Critic had declared that I could not write what I *had* written. . . .[725]

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[725] R. H. Stoddard, *Edgar Allan Poe.* From the text of the original article, courtesy of John T. Snyder, Esq., of Pelham, New York.

There is something very vivid and immediate about this. It gives us a glimpse into the hot little old New York on a July day, 1845, — shows us a pathetically anxious young poet strolling about the Park, and Clinton Hall, " on the southwest corner of Beekman and Nassau Streets," — the fast beating heart of the young man over his first poem in the hands of the " great editor " — asleep in his office chair, after lunch with English and the customary glass of whiskey at the bar — and the unfortunate awakening. In the glamor and dancing heat of that lost afternoon of nearly a century ago, we see young Stoddard darting down the stairs with the curses of Poe ringing in his ears, and wiping his forehead as he stands amazed on the fiery brick sidewalks under the sign of the *Broadway Journal.* But, above all, stands out clearly the disastrous effect of a drink, even a drink after lunch, on Mr. E. A. Poe. The courteous reception of the young poet at 195 Broadway, when Poe was sober, makes the contrast plain. He must have had a sympathy for young poets, he had himself been one. Yet the effect of egotism and a casual glass was sufficient to hurl a sensitive, and, as we know from other records, a rather diffident young man, headlong into the street, with curses and threats ringing in his ears. The incident was never forgiven, and years later, the pen that had written the *Grecian Flute* was employed with damning effect against Edgar Allan Poe.

How natural, and yet how unfortunate, it all was. One of the last glimpses was have into that office at Nassau and Beekman Streets, where the phantom figures of genius were rapidly ceasing to move to " a lute's well-tuned law," is another day in that hot Summer of 1845. This time, let us believe, it is a record of the real self, Israfel, and not his demon. It was a hot afternoon in August, so hot that Alec, the office boy " was overcome with heat and fainted dead away."

> . . . Poe was writing at his desk. When I recovered consciousness I was stretched out on the long table at which I had been at work and Poe was bending over me bathing my wrists and temples in cold water. He ministered to me until I was able to stand up, and then sent me home in a carriage.
>
> This act of kindness, coupled with his uniform gentle greetings

> when he entered the office of a morning, together with personal inquiries and words of encouragement, made me love and trust my editor.[716]

All of the evidence about Poe is like this, paradoxical, contradictory, and *true*. The witnesses for and against him must all be listened to with respect. The whole of their evidence is required to picture the man. "I am unable," says the just and careful Professor Woodberry, years later (1909), "to fall into that judgment which divides them into the goats and the sheep — the 'malignant' and the 'amiable'; they all, divergent as they are, seem to me to have written, according to their knowledge and their conscience, sincerely." There can be no doubt that the scholar is correct. The same man who drove young Stoddard into the street with every outrageous insult he could summon to his lips, a month later bent tenderly over the limp form of the child who had fainted, bathing his wrists and temples. The motives of both actions are sufficiently plain.

Alcohol, however, was not the only irritant that was contributing to the disorganization of Poe's nervous system. With the progressive failure of Virginia's health, now approaching the inevitable end, Poe had been taking a renewed interest in women. Chief of these was Mrs. Fanny Osgood, upon whom he called frequently and who came to see him. In the Spring and Summer of 1845 there was a good deal of talk about this devotion, as Mrs. Oakes Smith shows when she describes a call that Poe made upon her, in company with Virginia.

> The first time I ever saw Mr. Poe, he called upon me with his pretty child-wife, who must have been to him as near as anything earthy could be, 'Lenore,' with her long lustrous eyes, and serious lovely face. I had been inclined to a prejudice against him, from some gossip (*evidently about Mrs. Osgood*) that had come to my ears, but seeing him disarmed it all. I noted his delicate organization — the white, fine skin of a face that had upon it an expression of questioning like that of a child, a shade of anxiety, a touch of awe, of sadness; a look out of the large, clear eyes of intense solitude.
>
> I felt a painful sympathy for him, just as one would feel for a bright, over-thoughtful child. I said at once, 'Ah, Mr. Poe, this country affords no arena for those who live to dream.'

> 'Do you dream? I mean sleeping dream?' he asked quickly.
>
> 'Oh, yes. I am a perfect Joseph in dreaming, except, that my dreams are of the unknown, the spiritual.'
>
> 'I knew it,' he said softly, 'I knew it by your eyes; and I — the great shadowy realm of dreams, whose music hidden from mortal ears, swells through all space, and gleams of more than mortal beauty ravish the eyes, comes to me — that is to dream!' and his eyes were far off in expression as if he saw them upon the instant. Suddenly he asked:
>
> 'Do those sweet, shadowy faces wear to you an expression of pain?'
>
> 'Not so much of pain as grave thoughtfulness — a tender sympathy.'
>
> 'Ah, that is *your* mind — to me they wear a look of suffering — patient suffering — almost an appeal — and I spread out my hands to reach them. I call to them in my dreams. I am more to them than they to me. I call to them to speak, but they are silent, and float away, pointing onward.' [726]

This is certainly one of the most important pieces of reporting on Poe's conversation and psychology that we have. Virginia's remarks are not recorded. It was her custom to sit silently by and say nothing.

In the Midsummer of 1845 the Poes again moved, this time from 195 Broadway to slightly better quarters at 85 Amity Street, not far from their old lodgings there. The necessity for the change was doubtless due to Virginia's health, who found the heat lower downtown to be weakening. This house was not far from Washington Square, and there, in one or two rooms, they remained during the ensuing Fall and Winter, Poe going to work at Nassau Street. Like Spring Garden Street, it was a residence of forlorn hope. Here, Mrs. Osgood came to visit them. This time we get a more definite impression of Virginia.

> It was in his own simple yet poetical home that to me the character of Edgar Poe appeared in its most beautiful light. Playful, affectionate, witty, alternately docile and wayward as a petted child, for his young, gentle, and idolized wife, and for all who came, he had, even in the midst of his harassing duties, a kind word, a pleasant smile, a graceful and courteous attention. At his desk beneath the romantic picture of his loved and lost Lenore, he would sit, hour after hour, patient, assiduous, and uncomplaining, tracing, in an exquisitely clear chirography, and with almost superhuman swiftness, the lightning thoughts

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[726] *Diary* of Elizabeth Oakes Smith, Lewiston Journal Co., Lewiston, Maine, page 116.

—as they flashed through his wonderful and ever-wakeful brain. I recollect, one morning, toward the close of his residence in this city (*New York*), when he seemed unusually gay and light-hearted, Virginia, his sweet wife, had written me a pressing invitation to come to them; and I, who never could resist her affectionate summons, and who enjoyed his society far more in his own home than elsewhere, hastened to Amity Street. I found him just completing his series of papers entitled *The Literati of New York*. 'See,' said he, displaying in laughing triumph several little rolls of narrow paper (he always wrote thus for the press), 'I am going to show you by the difference of length in these, the different degrees of estimation in which I hold all you literary people. In each of these one of you is rolled up and fully discussed. Come, Virginia, help me! ' And one by one they unfolded them. At last they came to one that seemed interminable. Virginia laughingly ran to one corner of the room with one end, and her husband to the opposite with the other. 'And whose lengthened sweetness long drawn out is that? ' said I. 'Hear, hear! ' he cried, 'just as if her little vain heart didn't tell her it's herself.' [727]

Mrs. Osgood greatly excited Poe. Doubtless, she had about her that *expression of the eyes* which mainly attracted him to women. Virginia seems to have been a complacent cipher, even a willing go-between. Later on, at least, Mrs. Clemm became alarmed. Poe followed Mrs. Osgood—"I went to Albany, and afterwards to Boston and Providence to avoid him." [728] Talk flew about, and Mrs. Osgood's family became alarmed. All of this, of course, was vastly disturbing to Poe. An active and dangerous correspondence continued between them, and exchanges of poetry in the columns of the *Journal*.

During the same month (July), Poe appeared at the commencement exercises of the Rutgers Institute, held in the Rutgers Street Church before a large audience. On this occasion he sat on the stage with Dr. J. W. Francis, Professors Lewis, Elias Loomis, and Tellkamp, and served on a committee consisting of himself, W. D.

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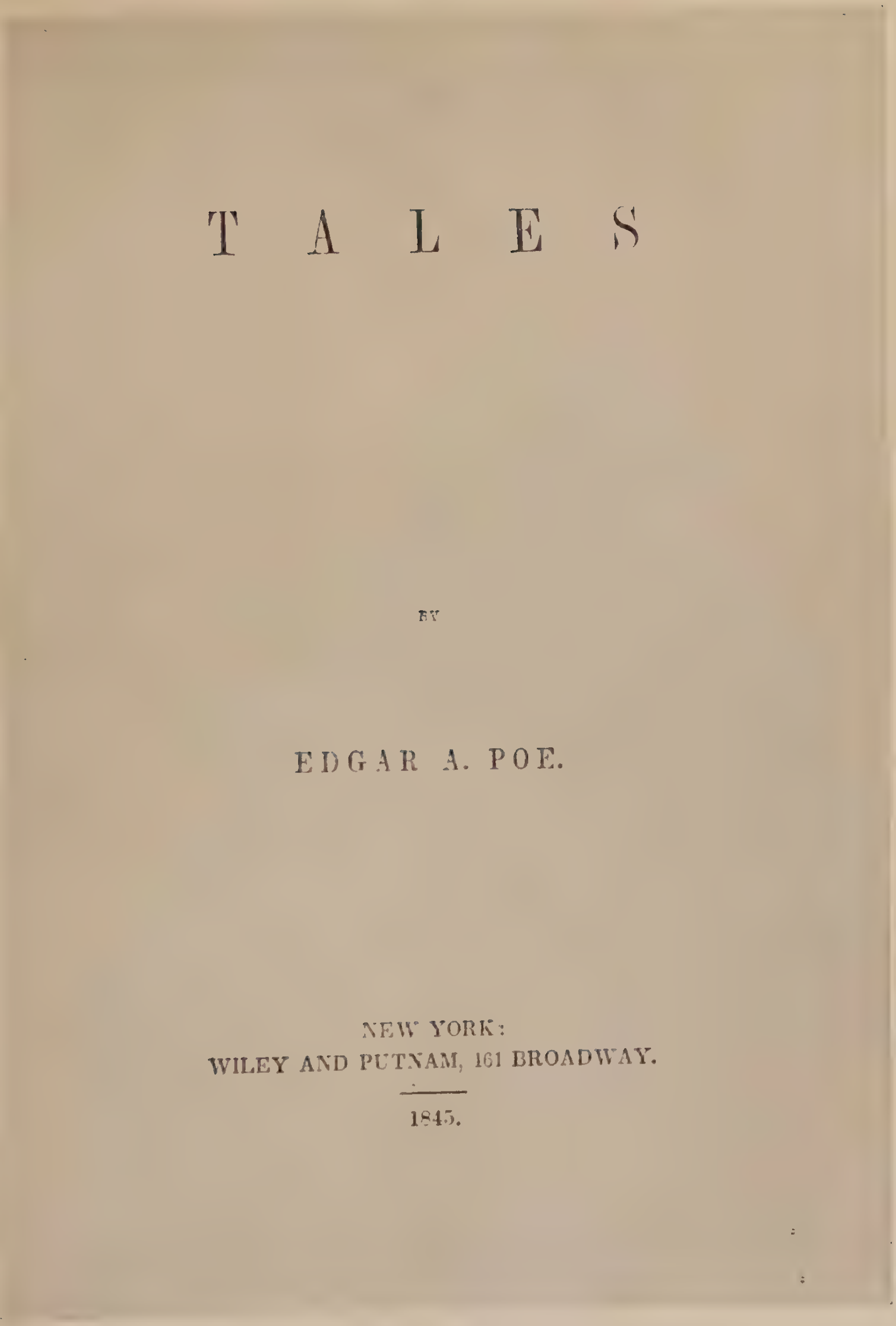
[727] Griswold, lii, liii, also see further account of Poe by Mrs. Osgood in the *Home Journal*, October 12, 1849, written on her death-bed. This reminiscence evidently applies to the time when Poe was engaged upon the *Literati* articles, perhaps early in 1846.

[728] This "visit" at Albany, and the trip to Boston and Providence seem to have taken place in the Summer of 1845. See Chapter XXIII, page 660. The exact duration of Poe's association with Mrs. Osgood is somewhat obscure.

Snodgrass, and Henry T. Tuckerman. They awarded a prize to the best poetical composition from the graduating class of "young, cultured, and refined females." The prize poem which began "Deep in a glade by trees o'erhung," and went on for over a hundred equally chaste lines, was read by the author of *The Raven*. The school had considerable social prestige, and Poe's presence was an indication of his notoriety at the time. This occasion served to patch up a quarrel with Tuckerman. There were seven pages of notice in the *Evening Mirror* for July 19 given over to the event.

During his sway on the *Broadway Journal,* Poe had not neglected the opportunity of using the columns of his own paper to further broadcast his works. Many of his stories and essays which had appeared in obscure places, and apparently failed to elicit any considerable notice or attention, were now, in many cases, revised and republished in the columns of the *Broadway Journal*. The prestige of the poet of *The Raven,* and a certain notoriety which surrounded their author, now served to bring them afresh to the notice of a larger and more important audience. The *Journal* was watched by other publications, especially during the period of the Longfellow War, and the skirmish with the transcendentalists. Many of its offerings were clipped and republished, a custom which Poe was very apt at stimulating. Both his poetry and prose were now much discussed by the *literati* and others, and attracted more important attention than they had before. In addition to this, the editor-author maintained his connection with both *Godey's* and *Graham's,* the *Democratic Review* in Philadelphia, and the *Whig-Review* in New York. This premeditated, and carefully cultivated insurance against oblivion had been further increased in June, 1845, by the republication of some of Poe's tales by a New York publisher. For the first time he did not have to give his work away. He received a royalty of 8 cents on the sale of every volume!

Tales by Edgar A. Poe, New York: Wiley & Putnam, 161 Broadway; 1845, was the eighth bound volume of Poe's work which had appeared since 1827, if the abortive attempt to reissue the *Tales* in paper covers, in Philadelphia, can be counted



TALES

BY

EDGAR A. POE.

NEW YORK:
WILEY AND PUTNAM, 161 BROADWAY.

1845.

Title Page of *Tales*, by Edgar A. Poe

New York 1845

Edgar Allan Poe's eighth work to be published in volume form. Bound in single, and double volumes

as a "volume." The book was without a preface and contained 228 pages of prose, twelve tales in all. They were *The Gold Bug, The Black Cat, Mesmeric Revelation, Lionizing, The Fall of the House of Usher, A Descent into the Maelström, The Colloquy of Monos and Una, The Conversation of Eros and Charmion, The Murders in the Rue Morgue, The Mystery of Marie Rogêt, The Purloined Letters,* and *The Man of the Crowd.* The volume was Number 2 in Wiley & Putnam's *Library of American Books.*[729]

The volume of tales which Poe had sent to Anthon in the Spring of 1844, to present to Harpers, had contained seventy stories, according to Poe's own reckoning. The volume which now appeared in 1845 contained twelve. The selection for Wiley & Putnam had been made by Evert A. Duyckinck, an able editor connected with the firm, who had chosen with an eye for sales, rather than artistic merit. Poe, however, was very dissatisfied, as the selection, he felt, did not give any idea of a point he was constantly harping on, *i.e.,* the versatility of his genius. The stories chosen were largely from the tales of ratiocination. It has been said that Duyckink showed able judgment by choosing the tales upon which the fame of Poe mainly rests. This literary judgment may be questioned, as it is quite likely that the popularity of these stories *resulted* from the fact of their achieving wide circulation before the others were again made available in volume form. A number of these volumes contain Poe's autograph and inscription, as he is known to have kept copies by him, and to have used them for presentation purposes. During the printing and publication of this volume of collected prose tales, Poe was also preparing a volume of his collected verse which appears to have gone to the same publisher sometime in September. At the same time, he was also engaged upon a book which he refers to under the various titles of *The American Parnassus* and *Literary America.* This he also hoped to have Wiley & Putnam publish. *The American Parnassus* was probably an anthology planned to contain critical data and biographical sketches of contemporaries. For various reasons, like the *Stylus,* it was never to see the light.

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[729] For the use of first editions of the 1845 *Tales* and *The Raven and Other Poems,* from which the descriptions are taken, and for the reproductions of the title pages, I am indebted to the New York Public Library.

Sometime during the Summer of 1845, although the exact time is not now very plain, Poe was much disturbed by the withdrawal of Mrs. Osgood to Albany, where she went to live. Whether this was to avoid Poe or not, is by no means clear. Other circumstances seem to have been the deciding factors. Poe was much exercised, however, at her departure and went to pay her a visit at Albany, the events of which are obscure. Mrs. Osgood later went to Boston, it is said to avoid him. He saw her there, nevertheless, soon afterward, perhaps about the time of his lecture (*sic*). From Boston they went to Providence, Rhode Island, or met there one evening.

Poe had once seen some poems that had been contributed to the *Democratic Review* by Mrs. Helen Whitman, a poetess who lived in Providence, Rhode Island. Through them, he thought he recognized in her a spiritual sister. She was a widow in fair circumstances and a transcendentalist. In addition, her name was *Helen,* and she was said to be beautiful. The combination of circumstances aroused Poe's interest. There were moods in her poetry, which he thought were peculiar to himself. Mrs. Osgood, who was alarmed at Poe's attentions, and yet probably feared to dismiss him in the state of mind in which she found him, was, it appears, anxious to have him meet Mrs. Whitman, and had waited for him after a lecture and poetry recital, when they had wandered about the town till a rather late hour.

It was upon this visit to Providence that Poe first saw Mrs. Whitman. Griswold says in a garden of roses by moonlight, relying on Poe's lines *To Helen,* in which he so places the scene. Writing later to Mrs. Whitman, Poe alludes to the meeting.

> You may remember that once when I passed through Providence with Mrs. Osgood I positively refused to accompany her to your house, and even provoked her into a quarrel by obstinacy and the seeming unreasonableness of my refusal.

At a late hour, however, on this summer night, Poe became restless and left the hotel. He strolled past Mrs. Whitman's house at the corner of Benefit and Church Streets. There was moonlight, and Mrs. Whitman happened to be standing in the street door taking the air. She afterward wrote in a letter:

> I was not ' wandering in a garden of roses ' as Dr. Griswold has seen fit to describe me but standing on the side-walk or in the open doorway of the house on that sultry ' July evening ' when the poet saw me and ' dreamed a dream ' about me which afterwards crystalized into immortal verse.

The impression upon Poe, nevertheless, seems to have been profound. He never forgot her, and the incident was one of several which led later on to a now famous courtship.

The intimacy with Mrs. Osgood was now at an end as far as personal interviews were concerned. She continued to be his benefactor when occasion served, but from Albany. Mrs. Osgood was dying of tuberculosis.

The Fall of 1845 marked the end of the last period in Poe's life when any long and sustained publishing or creative activity in prose was possible. The work of the years following, with the exception of one or two poems, was decidedly less important in range or quality to what had gone before. In the only considerable piece of creative prose which he attempted, *Eureka,* the signs of hallucination and disorganization are plain. In October, 1845, the period of collapse that always followed a time of feverish activity, was about to overtake him again. After the Summer of rest at the Brennans', he had driven himself relentlessly. The attainment of his great dream to own his own magazine seemed almost in his grasp. To keep up the pace, stimulants, this time alcohol, without doubt, had been rather constantly resorted to for a period of at least six months. In the fall of the year, Virginia again began to have hemorrhages. This was always maddening to Poe. In addition, he was undoubtedly in a condition of considerable psychic excitement over Mrs. Osgood, and other women with whom he had now begun to consort intimately. Poverty can, of course, be taken for granted. The result was an attack of what amounted to incipient insanity. He was very close to the edge — sometimes he was clear over it.[730] The result was fatal to all his hopes and effort. In October, 1845, he became sole proprietor and editor of the *Broadway Journal* — and utterly collapsed.

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[730] Poe's own statements in a letter to E. A. Duyckinck written from 85 Amity Street, New York, November 13, 1845, are the basis for this assertion.

A sad evidence of his inability any longer to cope adequately with the affairs of this world was the fiasco of his appearance on October 16 at the Odeon, in Boston, to deliver a lecture and reading before the Lyceum of that city. Poe was the second on the program to appear in the Lyceum that evening, the first talk being delivered by Caleb Cushing.

A great deal of comment had been caused in Boston by Poe's attacks on Longfellow and transcendentalism; Lowell had secured the invitation to Poe, and a large and expectant audience greeted his appearance. He was to have written an original poem for the occasion, but he was in such a disturbed state that he could not do this, and confessed as much to English shortly before the event. English advised him to give up his appearance under the circumstances, but Poe persisted, to his own discomfiture. This was just after a spree, it seems.

The lecture was initiated by some general and rather admonitory remarks about the heresies of didacticism, after which Poe read the worst poem he could have picked for the occasion, *Al Aaraaf*. It was long and utterly unsuited for oral delivery, and one of his earliest efforts. *The Raven* was greeted with applause. The occasion was a distinct disappointment to Poe and his friends.

Poe had gone to Boston with an assumed attitude of superiority, and the memory of the long controversy with "Outis" — from which he had by no means come off with flying colors — rankling in his mind. Out of sheer bravado, it seems, he had announced that he would write a new poem for the occasion and show the "Frog-Pondians" what a real original poet could do. Then he found that he was in such a nervous condition that he could not write at all. The result was *Al Aaraaf*, and the sight of backs as well as faces, followed by some severe press comments on the affair, and rejoicing in the camp of his enemies.

Some of the New York papers, after the custom of the time, republished the unfavorable notices from Boston, and ignored the more favorable ones which also appeared. The truth is, a great deal more was made of the incident than it deserved. Poe's condition had not enabled him to live up to his reputation, and several persons had been bored. With the appearance of the notices in New York, Poe was goaded into a series of rather pettish replies in the *Broadway Journal.* In order to cover up his condition, he tried to pass the matter off as a hoax. His enemies, whom he had made himself, would not permit the matter to drop, and his own rejoinders became less and less dignified. The reader can best judge for himself by a specimen of the extremes of both sides. The following are some of Poe's replies, and Thomas Dunn English's accusations made about a year later, after a physical encounter with Poe.

POE IN THE *Broadway Journal,* 1845

The facts of the case seem to be these: — We were invited to 'deliver' (stand and deliver) a poem before the Boston Lyceum. As a matter of course, we accepted the invitation. The audience was 'large and distinguished.' Mr. Cushing preceded us with a very capital discourse. He was much applauded. On arising we were most cordially received. We occupied some fifteen minutes with an apology for not 'delivering' as is usual in such cases, a didactic poem: a didactic poem being in our opinion no poem at all. After some further words — still of apology — for the 'indefiniteness' and 'general imbecility' of what we had to offer — all so unworthy of a Bostonian audience — we commenced and with many interruptions of applause, concluded. Upon the whole the approbation was considerably more (the pity too) than that bestowed upon Mr. Cushing.

When we had made an end, the audience, of course, rose to depart — and about one tenth of them, probably, had really departed, when Mr. Coffin, one of the managing committee, arrested those who remained by the announcement that we had been requested to deliver *The Raven.* We delivered *The Raven* forthwith — (without taking a respite) — were very cordially applauded again — and this was the end of it — with the exception of the sad tale invented to suit her own purpose by that amiable little enemy of ours, Miss Watters. It would scarcely be supposed that we would put ourselves to the trouble of composing for the Bostonians anything in the shape of an *original* poem. We did not. We had a poem (of about five hundred lines) lying by us — one quite as good as new. . . *That* we gave them — it was the best we had — for the price. . . . The poem is what is occasionally called a 'juvenile poem' — but the fact is, it is anything but juvenile now, for we wrote it, printed it and published it, in book form, before we had fairly completed our tenth year. . . . Over a bottle of champagne that night, we confessed to Messrs. Cushing, Whipple, Hudson, Fields, and a few other natives who swear not altogether by the frog-pond — we confessed, we say, the soft impeachment of the hoax. . . .

THOMAS DUNN ENGLISH IN THE *Evening Mirror,* 1846

. . . He accepted an invitation to deliver a poem before a Boston institution — the Lyceum, I think. When I remonstrated with him on undertaking a task he could not perform, he alleged that he was in want of the money they would pay him, and would continue to 'cook up something.' Want of ability prevented him from performing his intention, and he insulted his audience, and rendered himself a laughing-stock, by reciting a mass of ridiculous stuff, written by some one, and printed under his name when he was about 18 years of age. It had a peculiar effect on his audience, who dispersed under its infliction; and when he was rebuked for his fraud; he asserted that he had intended a hoax. Whether he did or not is little matter, when we reflect that he took the money offered for his performance — thus committing an act unworthy of a gentleman, though in strict keeping with Mr. Poe's previous acts. . . .

Thus the war of the crane and the frogs continued with considerable rippling of the shallows in the frog-pond. Despite the mixture of metaphors, it was a typhoon in a teapot from which all hands emerged with black eyes and bleeding noses.

Poe had become sole owner of the *Broadway Journal* by paying $50 to Mr. Bisco in the shape of a personal note endorsed by Horace Greeley. Fitz-Greene Halleck also signed notes, the only eventual value of which, to the endorsers, was the autograph of Poe. Even this seems to have been of small avail, as Horace Greeley testifies in *Recollections of a Busy Life.* Chivers was also again appealed to, but staved the decision off until the *Journal* succumbed. In Poe's condition there was, indeed, no hope for it. On November 13, 1845, Poe wrote to his publishers a letter which makes sufficiently plain his physical, mental, and financial situation.

Thursday Morning-13th 1845
65 Amity Street.

MY DEAR DR. DUYCKINCK, — For the first time during two months I find myself entirely myself — dreadfully sick and depressed, but still myself. I seem to have just awakened from some horrible dream, in which all was confusion and suffering — relieved only by a constant sense of your kindness, and that of one or two other considerate friends. I really believe that I have been mad — but indeed I have had abundant reason to be so. I have made up my mind to a step which will preserve me, for the future, from at least the greater portion of the troubles which have beset me. In the mean time, I have need of the most active exertion to extricate myself from the embarrassments into which I have already fallen — and my object in writing you this note is (once again), to beg your aid. Of course I need not say to you that my most urgent trouble is the want of ready money. I find that what I said to you about the prospects of the *B. J.* is strictly correct. The most trifling immediate relief would put it on an excellent footing. All that I want is time to look about me; and I think that it is (in) your power to afford me this.

I have already drawn from Mr. Wiley, first $30 — then 10 (from yourself) — then 50 (on account of the *Parnassus*) — then 20 (when I went to Boston) — and finally 25 — in all 135. Mr. Wiley owes me, for the *Poems* 75, and admitting that 1500 of the *Tales* have been sold, and that I am to receive 8 cts. a copy — the amount which you named, if I remember — admitting this, he will owe me $120, on them: in all 195. Deducting what I have received there is a balance of 60 in my favor. If I understood you, a few days ago, Mr. W. (Wiley) was to settle with me in February. Now, you will already have anticipated my request. It is that you would ask Mr. W. to give me, today, in lieu of all farther claims, a certain sum whatever he may think advisable, so dreadfully am I pressed, that I would willingly take even the $60 actually due (in lieu of all farther demand) than wait until February: — but I am sure that you will do the best for me that you can.

Please send your answer to 85 Amity Street and believe me — with most sincere friendship and ardent gratitude.

Yours, EDGAR A. POE

Chivers was again appealed to two days later, and at the end of November, Mr. George Poe of Baltimore. Poe had also resumed correspondence with his cousin Neilson.

The *Journal* needed only $140 to preserve it, it seems, but, despite desperate efforts to meet this amount, which would be due the first of the new year, Poe was unable to raise the sum.[731] Some of his notes must already have gone to protest, and his failings were too well known to enlist any further capital.

An affected gleam of optimism still continued to color the

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[731] Poe to Chivers, November 15, 1845.

Journal's columns, but even to Poe the finale must now have been plain. " The brandy nosed Mr. Briggs," an epithet which Poe had used to insult his former partner, no doubt did nothing to help, although Briggs' share of the venture was still unsettled. The crows began to gather, some with considerable satisfaction. Greeley's note went to protest; Halleck, who had already sent $100 would do nothing more, and there was no further response. During the last of the year Poe used the columns of the *Journal,* even while its death rattle was going on, to annoy his enemies and puff his friends in his old style, meanwhile contributing to two other magazines.[732] The last items in the *Journal,* of any note, from his pen were, *The Brook Farm* (review) on December 13, and a notice of Leigh Hunt, on December 20. Poe's movements, and the incidents of the demise of the *Broadway Journal* during the last few days of 1845, can be traced.[733]

On December 6, the offices of the *Journal,* probably on account of inability to pay the rent, were removed from Clinton Hall, at Beekman and Nassau Streets, to 103 Broadway, where Thomas H. Lane, who was a great admirer of Poe, had a lodging that he and Thomas Dunn English shared between them, keeping one servant. Lane evidently paid for the printing of the last two or three issues of the *Journal.*

On December 20, Poe called, and left material for the next issue lacking two columns. He was ill and despondent, and Virginia was thought to be dying. Poe then announced to Lane and English his intention of forthwith drowning his troubles by going on a spree. Lane tried to dissuade him, but failing to do so, decided to put an end to the agony, and it seems probable at this time that he secured a farewell card from Poe.

Christmas was doubtless spent at 85 Amity Street by Virginia's bed, and in deepest gloom. The day after, an issue of the *Broad-*

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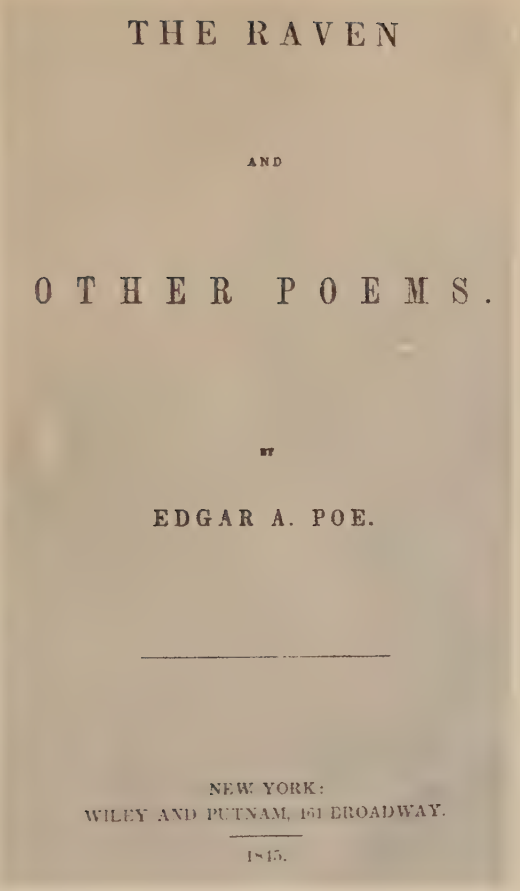
[732] Stories republished in the *Broadway Journal* about this time were: *Some Words with a Mummy, The Devil in the Belfry, A Tale of the Ragged Mountains, Four Beasts in One, The Oblong Box, Mystification,* and *Loss of Breath.* Poe also published for the first time *The Spectacles,* the manuscript of which he had sent to Horne in England, in 1843.

[733] The account of the last days of the *Broadway Journal* is taken from the reminiscences of Thomas H. Lane, and Thomas Dunn English.



THE RAVEN

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

EDGAR A. POE.

NEW YORK:
WILEY AND PUTNAM, 161 BROADWAY.

1845.

Title Page of *The Raven and Other Poems*
New York 1845
The ninth of Poe's works issued during his lifetime
Courtesy of the New York Public Library

way Journal appeared. There still being some unused copy on hand, English and Lane then made up a final number which appeared January 3, 1846, with the following brief farewell.

VALEDICTORY

Unexpected engagements demanding my whole attention, and the objects being fulfilled so far as regards myself personally, for which the *Broadway Journal* was established, I now, as its editor, bid farewell — as cordially to foes as to friends.

EDGAR A. POE

The *Broadway Journal* was seen no more. The only record of protest now appears on sundry notes cherished as autographs. One gleam remained to light the otherwise complete gloom. On the very last day of the year was published a volume of poems.

The Raven and Other Poems by Edgar A. Poe, New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1845. This book presented the collected poems of the author covering a period of almost two decades and was Poe's ninth volume. The youthful poems were here included with the important, and in many cases, saving revisions, which they had undergone, during that time in many and varied publications. It was the most important volume of poetry that had been issued up until that time in America, and contained in order: *The Raven, Valley of Unrest, Bridal Ballad, The Sleeper, The Coliseum, Lenore, Catholic Hymn, Israfel, Dreamland, Sonnet — To Zante, City in the Sea, To One in Paradise, Eulalie — A Song, To F——s S. O——d, To F——, Sonnet — Silence, The Conqueror Worm, The Haunted Palace, Scenes from Politian.*

Poems in Youth, containing an old footnote here reprinted, followed next with: *Sonnet — To Science, Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, A Dream, Romance, Fairy Land, To ——, To the River ——, The Lake ——, To —— ——, Song, To Helen.*[729]

Whatever may have been the shipwreck of hope in the world of reality, in this little volume, the weary, wayworn wanderer had successfully reached his own native shore in the realm of the imagination. If he found " the condor years " intolerable, he had also discovered a memorable escape.

Romance

Romance, who loves to nod and sing,
With drowsy head and folded wing,
Among the green leaves as they shake
Far down within some shadowy lake,
To me a painted paroquet
Hath been — a most familiar bird —
Taught me my alphabet to say —
To lisp my very earliest word
While in the wild wood I did lie,
A child — with a most knowing eye.

Of late, eternal Condor years
So shake the very Heaven on high
With tumult as they thunder by,
I have no time for idle cares
Through gazing on the unquiet sky.
And when an hour with calmer wings
Its down upon my spirit flings —
That little time with lyre and rhyme
To while away — forbidden things!
My heart would feel to be a crime
Unless it trembled with the strings.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Literati and the Fordham Pastoral

EDGAR POE was living in a time between times. There were a great many ideas in the air — a great many things were happening — but in America, at least, nothing had yet solidified politically, socially, or intellectually. Literature, as a consequence, was equally chaotic. There was a restless drift to the free lands of the West. Individuals found the answer to individual problems by abandoning the environment and atmosphere which produced them. The East was thus relieved of the pressure of solving what could happily be left to future and more crowded generations.

" The period from 1846 to 1860 was our period of comparative free trade. . . . It was a period of very great and very solid prosperity . . . the manufacturers did not perish, (nor did they) gain sudden and exorbitant profits. They made steady and genuine progress."[734] The bows of Yankee clipper-ships clove the most distant seas, from which the seaboard cities from Boston to New Orleans reaped a noble harvest. They were the homes of a stable merchant class, influenced to a considerable degree by European culture and Oriental importations. Already the Parthenon was beginning to mate with the pagoda. Hospitality was lavish. There was a supporting stream of immigration, and plenty of room for all. Consequently life still moved fairly leisurely, and with a self-assurance, and a certainty of abundance, that it has seldom attained elsewhere.

In New York, which was then verging on the half million mark in population, the literary and social problems of the day were eagerly and constantly discussed in the various " parlours " of those who were benefiting by a prosperous order of things; but discussed with a perfunctory ardor, and a sentimental perfervidness possible only to people who, as yet, failed to understand the æsthetic and social implications of questions which they restlessly agitated without feeling a compelling necessity to solve. Three great movements were already well initiated: abolition, prohibition, and woman suffrage. Thus matters went on in the colorless administration of James K. Polk, and the days of the Wilmot Proviso.

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[734] Sumner, page 54.

Could we now be suddenly introduced into one of the numerous salons of the time in Manhattan, after the shock of the costumes of the time had passed, we would then notice, as the chief difference thrust upon our attention, the accent and mannerisms of the vigorous speech of the time.[735] The spoken language was still largely that of the provincial English of the Eighteenth or even of the Seventeenth Century, inherited from colonial ancestors, and, as yet, undenatured by the debilitating and "refining" toil of three generations of sure but mistaken school "marms." "Calm" and "clam" were still pronounced alike, as they were meant to be. The Lord and lard were still confounded in sound, after the manner of Pope, and the grand vigorous "r" still rolled in "thunder," undenounced as yet by such expatriates as Henry James, and Rhodes scholars accustomed to the English curate's "Swahd of the Lahd and Gideon" affectations. "Umbrellers" were invariably carried in New England where the drive against the "r" began.[736] In the South where babies were nursed, and often suckled by "mammies" and "dahs" not long from the Congo or its tributaries, the Ethiopian accent was already fixed, and a matter of pride. The hard dry nasal twang pressed westward with the frontier. It was a difficult country in which to write classical English poetry. There were few who made capital of the condition as Poe did.

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[735] It must be remembered that the written speech of the time was the reverse face of the situation, the attempt to be refined and genteel. Americans were greatly troubled by the criticisms of English travelers and authors of the time, who laughed at the accent and use of words which were inherited from English grandfathers. North American English early began to go its own way, in vocabulary, spelling, and syntax. See the remarks of Noah Webster in his early dictionaries. Also *The American Language,* Mencken, and Professor Krapp's and Lounsberry's comments in their various articles and books. The effect of the hardy Scotch and Scotch-Irish immigrants, and of the Irish and German immigrants upon the language spoken in the United States, has seldom been given full credit for its virile and enriching contributions.

[736] In rhyming Poe occasionally was inconsistent with the terminal "r." In John Allan's household it would have been rolled; in Virginia neglected.

As the days of 1846 began to flap back on the calendar, the nation began to drift with a complacent, imperial, and largely slave owner's optimism into war with Mexico. In July, 1845, Texas had accepted a Congressional proposal of annexation. In May, the President had sent a message to Congress " announcing a state of war." The Mexicans, he said, had invaded *our* territory and shed the blood of fellow citizens *on our own soil!* A vast new territory was ruthlessly annexed, and the problem of slavery or free soil became more explicit. Henceforth politics, literature, and journalism began more and more to be given over to slavery *vs.* abolition, federal *vs.* state's rights. In such an atmosphere, the purely artistic products of poetical imaginations were less and less thought about or valued. Whittier's innumerable stanzas on " bondsman and proud Sothrons," and the atmosphere for *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were soon to be created.[737] In 1846, such literature was getting under way.

Underneath all of this, there was a blind political and social optimism difficult to understand.[738] To the spread of American political institutions, there was practically no effective resistance in North America. It was a vast field, and the inference was easily arrived at, that the wings of the eagle were rapidly to overshadow the world. The statements of statesmen, politicians, and journalists of the time, make the outbreak of imperialism in the 1890's seem like the maiden dreams of a child. " At no remote date the American continent will rejoice under the beneficent shadow of our free institutions destined to spread their blessings upon all from pole to pole." [739] It is impossible to exaggerate the ridiculous bombast that rolled in rhetorical periods from rostrums, stumps, and editorial sanctums. " Our destiny is bounded only by the world! "

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[737] The anti-slavery propaganda content of New England's literature was largely the cause of its contemporary popularity in the North, and its present eclipse.

[738] Americans in the 1840s had a blind faith in the *form* of their own government as the " best " for all peoples.

[739] By turning to the *Congressional Record* of 1845–49 any number of similar bombastic manifestos may be enjoyed *ad lib.* Many of the speeches by contemporary Congressmen would now lead to an interchange of notes, and the withdrawal of ambassadors, especially by South American countries.

The enormous impetus given to " progress " [740] by the suddenly acquired power conferred by mechanical inventions, and the application of machinery, led naturally to the expectation that the fields of psychology and art would be as rapidly exploited. The world was credulously prepared for the announcement of any new wonders. To an age which seemed to be, and actually was, swiftly acquiring a mastery over natural forces at an unprecedented speed, it seemed only natural that the realm of the supernatural might soon be annexed, explored, and exploited as a kind of spiritual Texas. In a few years, spiritualism, " psychic phenomena," and new religions were in full swing. Mormonism was already prospering alarmingly. The America of the 1840s and 1850s added new comments and offshoots to the Christianity of the era, the most powerful and, in numbers, the most far-reaching which had agitated men since the Reformation. A transatlantic Protestantism long cut off from its source, under new conditions, was following out its " natural destiny " of splitting up again and again into an infinite variety of mutually antagonistic sects. The same Philadelphia *Dollar Newspaper* which had conferred the $100 prize on Poe's *Gold Bug* was filled with the pictures and doings of Prophet Joseph Smith and his adherents. The vast unsettled lands of the great American desert revived and excused the institution of polygamy. In a few years, thousands of Americans were to dress themselves in white and calmly await upon housetops the second coming of Christ. Almost anything might happen, for almost everything had. In 1849, Eldorado was actually found.[741]

Such were some of the movements and cross-currents which agitated the more simple members of the new republican community. Even the more cultured and refined were leavened by the general ferment. The control of the conservatism of the New England, and the plantation communities was fast passing away. In the fourth generation, the sense of their being homogeneous communities with distinct European ideals was being absorbed, and weakened by the general continental mass. Puritanism, Quakerism, and Calvinism, all alike were in process of disintegration, and felt keenly the infringement upon them of the ideas and ideals of the new industrial democracy, against which, in self-protection, the " cavaliers " two decades later appeared in arms. Literature, as a reflection of all this, was no exception. It was stirred by strange, and, to us, vague and naïve currents.

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[740] " This disconcerted us so greatly that we thought it advisable to vary the attack to Metaphysics. *We sent for a copy of a book called the ' Dial '* and read out of it *a chapter or two about something which is not very clear, but which the Bostonians call the ' great Movement of Progress.'* (The *Dial* is now published in New York.) The Count merely said that *Great Movements* were awfully common things in his day, as for *Progress*, it was at one time quite a nuisance." Poe in *Some Words with a Mummy*. Italics supplied.

[741] See Poe's poem on his own idea of " Eldorado " written at the time of the Gold Rush, Chapter XXVI, page 801.

About Boston and Concord, the Puritan elements, still holding to some of their old tenets, were embarked upon the adventure of transcendentalism in religion and philosophy, or the social experiments of *Brook Farm* and *Fruitlands*. The whole northeastern seaboard from Maine to Virginia was stirred by the beginnings of spiritualism. New York was a hotbed. All classes, from the hard-headed Horace Greeley to the grandsons of patroons, attended lectures on mesmerism, the possibilities of galvanic resuscitation, and phrenology. Trance poets, phrenological professors, and psychically sensitive ladies were going about lecturing and writing for magazines. The society which had conquered nature by the machine, now felt itself to be on the verge of solving the mysteries of the intellect and of the spiritual world.

In western Pennsylvania the colonies of " Economists " and their like,[742] the last of the Eighteenth Century social experiments akin to the " Pantosocracy " of the Lake School, were going out of business from natural causes. In eastern Pennsylvania, Quakerism, Dunkerism, and the Mennonites still held firm. The Philadelphia Wistar Parties were continued among the aristocratically elect, and intellectually impotent Brahmins.[743] The brief light which the *Tusculum* group had shed in Baltimore in the '20s had proved a will-o'-the-wisp. That locality was absorbed in commercial enterprise, and the profitable planting of the Eastern Shore; Washington was conducting a war, and preparing for the duel between Calhoun and Webster; Richmond was given over to tobacco, politics, genealogy, and entertaining. The *Southern Literary Messenger* already pointed with pride to the days of Poe, and grew querulous over abolition. In South Carolina, Simms and Paul Hamilton Hayne suffered between literary admiration and social contempt, while the Charlestonians planted rice and engaged in their horse racing and gardening. In Georgia, one solitary and pathetic man strove in vain against his environment, inventing new metres, and silk-spinning machines. Chivers was troubled with the visions of transcendentalism, and wrote to Poe about the nature of God and "how do you pronounce 'Melpomene?' " He published volumes of poems composed of stanzas of pure inspiration followed by other stanzas of unutterable bathos. It was a new, a strange, a pregnant, and a baffling world to understand.

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[742] At " Economy " on the Ohio River below Pittsburgh. These people being celibates, strange doings ensued. This and similar colonies are an interesting paragraph in American history.

[743] See Chapter XIX, page 429.

It is all very well now to patronize and belittle it through the easily reversed lenses of hind-sight, but it was all very real and we may be sure very confusing to those who were swimming in the contemporary whirlpool, unable to get their heads above the level of its troubled waters to see the grand rapids ahead. Not to have some understanding of it, is to continue in an ignorantly patronizing attitude, and to throw an unnecessary cloak of mystery about such a man as Poe.[744] In one sense he was inevitably a part and parcel of it all. His stories of scientific mystery, *Von Kempelen and his Discovery, Mesmeric Revelation*, or *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*, must be read as the products of their time. an exploitation of its great expectations for physical and psychic science.

> Of course I shall not pretend to consider it any matter for wonder, that the extraordinary case of M. Valdemar has excited discussion. . . .

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[744] Myriad attempts in the literature of the day to be mysterious, horrible, and mystical can be found. They lacked the essential element of imagination.

Says Poe — under the circumstances of time and place, of course, not! It did so. The world was ready for it. Such facts were taken seriously by many on both sides of the water —

> Sir, — As a believer in Mesmerism I respectfully take the liberty of addressing you to know, if a pamphlet lately published in London (by Short & Co., Bloomsbury) under the authority of your name and entitled Mesmerism, in *Articulo-Mortis* is genuine.[745]

That was from a druggist in Stonehaven, Scotland.

> Boston, *December* 16, 1845
>
> Dear Sir, — Your account of M. Valdemar's case has been universally copied in this city, and has created a very great sensation. It requires from me no apology in stating, that I have not the least doubt of the *possibility* of such a phenomenon, for I did actually restore to active animation a person who died from excessive drinking of ardent spirits. He was placed in his coffin ready for interment.[746]

And in old England Mrs. Browning was greatly interested. No doubt her own interest extended to her group.

That these stories are so well constructed that their manner is still convincing and interesting, is simply to say that Poe exploited, successfully, certain of the thought currents of his time in the realm of imaginative art. That he was greatly impressed, but by no means wholly taken in by the pseudo-science, and secondary philosophies of the time, was due to his reliance upon reason, his scorn of mob emotion, and his egotistic certainty in his own powers of analysis. It must be remembered that his seeming and, sometimes, actual technical familiarity with many of the sciences and pseudo-sciences was due to the special material which he elaborated with special pleading to develop his themes. It was the power of his imagination which gave to this material a peculiar life. Hundreds of similar attempts to use it now lie forgotten in the unread pages of Middle American magazines and dusty volumes.[744]

In the Winter of 1845, and through the Spring of 1846, Poe was, for the first time since early Richmond days, certainly for the first time during his mature manhood, made welcome to the drawing-rooms, and to the circles of a contemporary American society that had some claim to consider itself of importance, and actually did at that time make an audible noise in the world.[747]

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[745] Arch Ramsay, Stonehaven, Scotland, to Poe, November 30, 1846. Poe replied "explaining," and asking news of his Allan "relatives" in Ayreshire. Ramsay could not locate them.

[746] Collyer to Poe, Boston, date given.

In Baltimore, his poverty and youth had made such association impossible. The return to Richmond, as we have seen, had found many doors closed to him for family reasons; in Philadelphia, the tradition of exclusiveness had made it impossible. New York was already more cosmopolitan, and with the fame that had accrued to him since the publication of *The Raven,* in certain circles, Mr. Poe found himself not only able to appear, but actually much sought after. If the "parlours," and in some cases the salons, which he now found thrown open to him were not the most exclusive, they were certainly the most active in a literary way, and the most interesting in New York. That Poe was anxious for social recognition, that the old sting of his repulse in Richmond now found some balm in another Gilead, and that his appearance in drawing-rooms of both fashion and pretension, was part of the reward of fame, and sweet to one who had had to stomach much that was bitter, there can be no doubt at all. "This is a world of sweets and sours —" he had written years before. Most of his experience had been with the sours. The effect upon him of the sweets was somewhat peculiar. The records of it are to be found in the history of his flirtations and the papers of the *Literati.*

After the demise of the *Broadway Journal,* Poe was now to be found more frequently than before at the houses of such *literati,* and dispensers of hospitality and conversation, as Miss Anna C. Lynch, Mrs. Fannie Osgood, the Reverend Orville Dewey, Mrs. Seba (Elizabeth Oakes) Smith, Margaret Fuller, Marcus Spring, James Lawson, and Dr. Manly. In Brooklyn, then and later, Poe was seen frequently at the home of Sarah Anna Lewis, a poetess of immense sentimental capacities. About these people, and in their parlors, gathered the literary, journalistic, and the outer fringe of the social life of the city. There, were to be found the many women then actively interested in writing but more so, in their own literary reputations, so aptly called "The starry sisterhood." The journalists and anthologists upon whom they battened and were battened upon were also present, and certain poets, minor authors, and artists. Occasionally, but not frequently, their busy system was disturbed by the transit through its midst of some larger, and less nebulous star. The galaxy of New York had satellites, and was in communication with solar systems to the north, chiefly with Boston, Concord, and Providence.

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[747] Poe never entered the magic realm of the then 400 in New York. This centered about Coventry Waddell's Gothic Villa! — at Fifth Avenue and Thirty-eighth Street. The contribution of this group to "American civilization" was the invention of policemen's uniforms by James G. Gerard at a fancy dress ball at the Villa where he appeared in "full uniform." The tattered "rattle watch" was forthwith a thing of the past. Mr. Poe was denied the privilege of association with such intellectual giants, a fact which has recently been lamented in the public prints.

The queen regnant of the *literati,* whose parlor was the most eagerly thronged, and which approached more nearly to the dignity of a genuine salon than any other, was Miss Anna C. Lynch (afterward, in 1855), the wife of Professor Vincenzo Botta). Miss Lynch entertained frequently in the evening at her house on Waverley Place. She was an occasional contributor to the contemporary magazines, newspapers, and parlor annuals, and was even ambitious enough to have attempted, with some success, *A Handbook of Universal Literature.* Miss Lynch is described as having been very pretty with a flair for repartee, with the tact of a Frenchwoman, and as generally quite charming. She had also a reputation for social exclusiveness which enhanced the value of her invitations. In the Spring of 1846 her hospitality was frequently extended to Edgar Allan Poe. According to Poe, her talent as a poetess, which he sardonically characterized as "unusual," rested upon her *Bones in the Desert,* and her *Farewell to "Ole Bull."*[748]

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[748] The sources for the descriptions of the salons and personalities of the *literati* are all taken from contemporary sources,—letters, diaries, magazines, prefaces to "works," and old prints. Some of the most important are, Poe, Stoddard, N. P. Willis, Elizabeth Oakes Smith, *Godey's Lady's Book,* the *Home Journal,* and files of contemporary newspapers. In order to avoid a senseless profusion of notes, the curious reader is referred generally to the grotesque literature of the time available at a public library — especially Poe's own papers on the *literati* in *Godey's Lady's Book.*

Visitors to Miss Lynch's salon were admitted by a trim twelve-year-old maid, and ushered upstairs to *two* parlors, warmed at either end of a vista of " corded and machicolated draperies by opposite coal fires." In front of one of these, neatly framed by a black mantel, it was the custom of Miss Lynch to receive her guests — " In person she is rather above the usual height, somewhat slender with dark hair and eyes." Beside her stood her elderly mother, and her sister, Mrs. Charles Congden, who had the rather fearsome reputation of being a lady humorist. Thither came the ladies of the *literati* in hoopskirts, and ostrich plumes, head-dresses, hair parted in the middle with thick water curls, or with heavy looped and taffy-like coiffures.

> Evening ball dresses are very pretty when each skirt is bordered with triple embroidery, such as those of gauze, and colored silk and gold upon a white background, and others in tulle, upon which are placed flowers formed of dots of lace, each being encircled with a light silver thread, producing an effect somewhat resembling that of silver lace, and which is really beautiful when worn over a skirt of pale pink and blue. Those of the tarlatan muslin retain favor; they are generally embroidered in a stripe or wreath, embroidered in silk to imitate gold. The corsage green, and open single skirt, also *à la grecque.*[749]

The gentlemen arrived in stove-pipe hats, black cloaks, and shawls. All except Horace Greeley.

The guests to be met at Miss Lynch's were certainly interesting. There was Miss Bogart, the spinster, who wrote solemn lyrics, the authoress of *He Came Too Late;* Mrs. Fannie Osgood — " she sparkled, exhaled and went to Heaven "; Mr. W. W. Gillespie, a mathematical genius who stuttered; and Dr. J. W. Francis, a florid, and delightfully good-humored, and wise old man with long white flowing locks. It was he who sometimes treated Poe. Thither also came the silent and somewhat Olympian William Cullen Bryant and his chatty wife, Fitz-Greene Halleck, now a little cynical, and G. P. Morris of *Woodman Spare That Tree.* Mrs. Oakes Smith, somewhat feared for her radical woman's rights proclivities, was frequently present, accompanied by her two young sons in roundabouts — Mr. Poe had just used up *Powhatan* and Mr. Seba Smith, its author, preferred to remain at home.[750] But there were also Dr. Griswold, and Ann Stephens, the dangerous, gossipy Mrs. Ellet, Mrs. Embury, Mrs. Hewitt, and many others.

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[749] ☞ " It is useless for others to *pretend* to give fashions, for *Godey's Lady's Book* is the standard that governs the female dress of this republic."

> In the plainly furnished room at one corner stands Miss Lynch with her round cherry face, and Mrs. Ellet, decorous and lady-like, who had ceased her conversation when Poe broke into his lecture. On the sofa in the side of the room I (T. D. English) sit with Miss Fuller, afterward the Countess Ossoli, on my right side, and Mrs. Elizabeth Oakes Smith on my left. At my feet little Mrs. Osgood, doing the infantile act, is seated on a footstool, her face upturned to Poe, as it had been previously to Miss Fuller and myself. In the centre stands Poe, giving his opinions in a judicial tone and occasionally reciting passages with telling effect. . . .
>
> I had been talking with Catherine Sedgwick, (says Mrs. Oakes Smith) who was admired through a long life for her literary achievements, and Mr. Poe joined us. Mr. Poe, I thought, had not much praised me in a critique upon 'autographs,' but this did not disturb me so much as the injustice which he had done my husband. The conversation became animated, and I soon saw that . . . *The Raven* was really Mr. Poe: that he did not from another mental phase produce *Lenore,* or any other poem, but the idiosyncrasy of the author's mind was continued in each like his dream within a dream. Then I laid aside my bit of personal pique and recognized the weird poet for such as he was.
>
> 'I am afraid my critique upon you did not please you,' he said, with his large eyes anxiously fixed upon me; I was half inclined to take him seriously to task, and now I wish I had done so, but I only replied:
>
> 'I have no right to complain. I suppose you wrote as you thought.'
>
> 'I meant great praise,' he replied . . .
>
> Poe was an adroit and elegant flatterer for the time being, his imagination being struck by some fine woman. His language was refined, and abounded in the finer shades of poetry, praising a woman's eyes, he likened them to 'the brown leaf which had fallen by still waters.' Asked to define grace, he gave the name of a woman who had passing touched his fancy. He was always deferential; he paid a compliment to a woman's understanding no less than to her personal charms. He

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[750] *Powhatan;* a metrical romance in seven cantos, by Seba Smith (husband of Mrs. Smith), New York: Harper and Brothers, 1846. Poe remarked of this author, "We doubt whether he could distinctly state the difference between an epic and an epigram." — *Literati.*

> had an exquisite perception of all the graces of manner and shades of expression, was an admiring listener, and an unobtrusive observer. . . . His manners were refined, and the scope of his conversation that of the gentleman and the scholar. His wife, being an invalid, dared not encounter the night air, but he spoke of her tenderly and often.

Richard Henry Stoddard, the youth whom Poe had so offended some months before, also came to Miss Lynch's — "I was introduced into her salon either by Dr. Rufus Wilmot Griswold or by Mr. Bayard Tayler."

> I know that the night was a cold one, in November, I fancy, and that, chilled through and through, in spite of a thick cloak, which I wore, I stooped and chafed my hands before her glowing coal fire. Many a day passed before I heard the last story about my blundering *gaucherie* on that woeful night.[751] The Willises were there, the poet who wrote *Scripture Sketches* in his youth and . . . letters from all quarters of the world — his second wife and his daughter, Imogen. But before those I see Miss Lynch, tall, gracious, kindly. . . . Present also, were two of the swarming sisterhood of American singers, one elderly Spinster Miss Bogart . . . etc. On a later occasion, early the following spring I met another singer of tender memories . . . thirty eight summers had touched her lightly, she was in a decline, reminding her friends, after her soul had taken its flight of Young's *Narcissa* . . . Mrs. Osgood was a paragon. For, loved of all men who knew her, she was hated by no woman who ever felt the charm of her presence. Poe was enamored of her, *felt or fancied that he was which with him was the same thing.*[752]

Here we must leave the romantic young Stoddard sheepishly warming his hands before Miss Lynch's coal fire to visit Mrs. Seba Smith, at home in Greenwich Street.

> We were somewhere near the old mansion of Bishop Moore, which at that time was a fine, picturesque dwelling, the grounds walled up and several feet higher than the street. Near Thirty-Third Street was the Asylum for the Blind, and all in this vicinity was pasture land, rocks, and wild flowers, and now and then a cow or a few sheep grazing. I was very homesick for a long time after my arrival in New York and used to take long walks with my children in the outskirts of the city in the hope of dissipating my discontent, for it must be remembered

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[751] Stoddard had warmed his hands before shaking hands with his hostess!

[752] Italics supplied — one of many such remarks by persons who knew Poe.

> that above the present Thirtieth Street was a wilderness of rocks, bushes, and thistles with here and there a farm house.[753]
>
> I had my well-attended salon like Dr. Dewey and many others. Conversation was certainly more of a fine art in those days than it now is,[754] and art, humor, and enthusiasm won a more respectful and appreciative response. Society was smoldering over the existence of slavery at the South and there was now and then a scintillating gleam of the national passionateness that culminated in the great Civil War. People everywhere, even in social circles, were intensely in earnest. I was talking in my rooms upon Woman Suffrage, and I think did not quite relish much of the light badinage that came to the surface by the wits of the period. . . .
>
> Perhaps no one received any more marked attention than Edgar A. Poe. His slender form, intellectual face and weird expression of eye never failed to arrest the attention of even the least observant. He did not affect the society of men, rather that of highly intellectual women with whom he liked to fall in to a sort of eloquent monologue, half dream, half poetry. Men were intolerant of all this, but women fell under his fascination and listened in silence. . . .

Mrs. Smith's gatherings were held fortnightly, on Sunday nights, and it is at her house, probably in the Winter of 1846, that we hear of Virginia's appearing in public for the last time. She was dressed in a homemade gown of some red stuff, trimmed with rather quaint homemade yellow lace, and sat silently, pale but smiling by the fire, while her husband recited *The Raven* to an applauding little company. One never hears of Mrs. Clemm's being at any of these parties, but it is known that she capitalized "Eddie's friendship," and borrowed money from Poe's lady friends, which put him in great embarrassment, and sometimes obligated him for favorable reviews or revisions of their poetry. There was no other way to pay back such favors. On the other hand, Mrs. Clemm, no doubt, found that there was no other way to live. A good many of the "starry sisterhood," it seems, called from time to time at 15 Amity Street, and later on at Fordham. There was now a great deal of curiosity about Poe. His domestic tragedy was interesting, and his association with Mrs. Osgood the theme of much gossip.

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[753] This description is a little earlier than 1846, but holds substantially true for Poe's time in New York.

[754] In the late 1860's, that is.

> I meet Mr. Poe very often at the receptions (says a correspondent of Mrs. Whitman in a letter dated January 7, 1846). He is the observed of all observers. His stories are thought wonderful and to hear him repeat *The Raven* which he does very quietly, is an event in one's life. People seem to think there is something uncanny about him, and the strangest stories are told, and, what is more, *believed,* about his mesmeric experiences, at the mention of which he always smiles. His smile is captivating. . . . Everybody wants to know him; but only a few people seem to get well acquainted with him.

The legend of "Israfel," "The Raven," and all the rest, was already well under way. The story about Mrs. Osgood and Poe, and how Virginia was ill, and Mrs. Clemm was forced to borrow money, and that Dr. Griswold was in love with Mrs. Osgood, etc., etc., went around and about the town, as such stories do. "But Poe had a rival in her affections in Dr. Griswold, whom she transformed for the moment into an impassioned poet," says Stoddard. The remark is not without significance in view of the Doctor's obituary style after Poe's death. Mrs. Osgood, after a while, gave up seeing the "Raven." The exact time of her decision is somewhat obscure. In the meantime there were doubtless a good many who remembered the lines addressed *To F——*, and cherished a clipping from the *Broadway Journal* —

Beloved, amid the earnest woes
That crowd around my earthly path
(Dear path, alas! where grows
Not e'en one thornless rose) —
My soul at last a solace hath
In dreams of thee — and therein knows
An Eden of calm repose.

And thus thy memory is to me
Like some enchanted far-off isle
In some tumultuous sea,
Some ocean throbbing far and free
With storms — but where meanwhile
Severest skies continually
Just o'er that one bright island smile.[755]

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[755] *Broadway Journal,* I, 17. One of Poe's poems frequently republished since July, 1835, with some eight or nine revisions, "going the rounds of the press." There were a number of other items published for Mrs. Osgood by Poe in the *Broadway Journal.*

Rufus Wilmot Griswold came frequently to Mrs. Oakes Smith's soirées, and at other times. She describes him:

> In person, Mr. Griswold was tall and slender with slight stoop of the shoulders and unbecoming to him; his head was picturesque, and his eyes large, soft, and beautiful. A general sensuousness rather than intellectuality was observable in his makeup. He was capable of a caustic satire in conversation, mingled with a playful wit, which made him always attractive to a circle, for the absence of any marked positivity in his character made his humors not only to be tolerated but admired, and even those who might have suffered from his strictures, were more likely to laugh than reprehend. . . . Under an appearance of almost indolent ease, he covered untiring, indefatigable industry, and the matter-of-fact industry conflicting with the intimations of his own genius, gave him that half-humorous, half-pathetic cast of mind and character, which rendered him attractive to the friends who best knew him. . . . That he was capricious and allowed his personal predilections and prejudices to sway him is most true, for he had the whims of a woman coupled with a certain spleen which he took no pains to conceal yet he was weakly placable. . . . Mr. Griswold was in the habit of going about with bits of criticism in his pocket and scraps of poetry which he had picked up, these he would read and comment upon. He had the laugh of a child and was strangely unable to see the world as an arena for forms, ceremonies and proprieties.

Despite the accusation of a certain canine strain by another acquaintance, the strong feline characteristics of the Reverend Doctor Griswold are here plainly manifest. The same lady noticed that, like Poe, Dr. Griswold had "a lonely soul." It was not one that could forgive criticism, or forget jealousy. Griswold also knew that Poe was preparing an anthology. This afterward seems to have fallen into his hands, and it doubtless contained reversals of his own judgments, and criticisms which were perhaps hard to stomach. Griswold could neither like, nor forgive Poe his superior gifts and airs. There is something cat-like in his playing and flattering while Poe lived and was to be feared, and something equally feline in the swift pounce upon him as soon as he died. For a time the claws remained hidden in the soft, swift paws.

Through all this busy self-important life of the *literati*, one catches intriguing little glimpses of a defunct but, withal, fascinating enough time. Willis, bearded like a pard, and extremely youthful, is seen entertaining lavishly, far too lavishly, at the *Astor House,* with the fairy-like little Imogen by his side. Poe and Mrs. Osgood meet there. Horace Greeley comes tramping in, trousers half tucked into his boots, a dingy white coat, and affectedly uncouth manners. For some years he had been a vegetarian, but the hasty pudding and milk that his wife, who " abhorred dress and fashion," set before him at breakfast, had caused him to return to flesh to supply the tremendous energy which he poured out into the columns of the *Tribune.* His conversation always dealt with timely *isms* that might further his political hopes. " His stock in trade was truth, honesty, and human equality." Greeley was kindly enough to sign notes for Poe, and too hard-headed ever to forget their having gone to protest. Margaret Fuller, who was the literary critic of the *Tribune* from 1842 to 1845, lived with the Greeleys, and was one of the best critics of her day.

Parties are also to be glimpsed at Marcus Spring's, a New York merchant of literary proclivities. There Poe saw Lydia Maria Child, a New England novelist, one of Spring's protégées. There were other affairs at the residence of James Lawson, a Scotch merchant with whom Poe was anxious to be on good terms, for the prosperous Scotchman was fond of the society of authors, and knew many booksellers. Thomas Dunn English, Hart, the sculptor, Mary Gove Nichols, Mrs. Embury, and Mary Hewitt were all much about in the evenings and afternoons from house to house.

It was not such a large town then, and intimacies were bound to be intimate. Mr. Poe, in some quarters, began to find it very intimate indeed. Across the town is to be traced the invisible web of correspondence, which the letters, that Griswold afterward allowed to be destroyed, began to weave about Poe, — letters to Mrs. Osgood, Mrs. Ellet, Margaret Fuller, and a half dozen others — and their replies. These accumulated in the rooms at Amity Street, and they were read by Mrs. Clemm, as it will appear later.

Virginia's health was bad, much worse! Eddie was consequently despondent, much shaken and agitated by society, provided with no regular employment, and yet writing and corresponding frantically. It is a rather vivacious picture of Poe that one gets in the drawing-rooms of the *literati,* but once out in the darkness, tramping the streets, his face seems to have fallen back into the old lines as his brain and feet traveled again and again the familiar, ever-present grooves of despair.

> The last time that I remember to have seen him (says Stoddard) was in the afternoon of a dreary autumn day. A heavy shower had come up suddenly, and he was standing under an awning. I had an umbrella, and my impulse was to share it with him on his way home; but something — certainly, not unkindness — withheld me. I went on and left him there in the rain, pale, shivering, miserable, the embodiment of his own
>
> Unhappy master,
> Whom unmerciful disaster
> Followed fast, and followed faster.

The recollection seems to apply about this time, *i.e.,* shortly after the *Broadway Journal* had failed, perhaps in the Fall of 1846.[756]

Poe's social experiences among the writers of New York in 1845–46, his knowledge of the opinions in which they were held by their own contemporaries, through his personal contacts, and in conversations among them, were now turned to professional use in a series of papers that began to appear in *Godey's Lady's Book* in Philadelphia with the Spring of 1846.

Since November, 1845, *Godey's Lady's Book* must have been the main source of his livelihood. He had contributed criticism to every number since the month mentioned, in which Bryant, W. G. Simms, Mrs. Osgood, Mrs. Hewitt, Mrs. Seba Smith, and Mathews had been commented upon. In addition to this, *Graham's* had carried some of the *Marginalia* in March, 1846, and *The Philosophy of Composition* in April. This last contained the so-called analysis of how Poe wrote *The Raven.*[757] The series in *Godey's,* which had already appeared, was now followed by another series of papers dealing with thirty-eight writers, men and women, then resident in New York, and known to Poe.

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[756] R. H. Stoddard *Memoir,* 1874, page 81. A most untrustworthy compilation, except in regard to the author's own personal recollections of Poe.

[757] See Chapter XXII, page 612.

These papers, known as *The Literati,* began to come out in *Godey's Lady's Book* in May, 1846, and continued through the November issue. As we have already seen, Poe was preparing an anthology, *The American Parnassus,* that was to have rivaled and superseded Griswold's. He is known to have been busily engaged upon it as late as December, 1846, and later.[758] The papers, which now began to appear in *Godey's,* probably represented what would now be called the advance magazine publication of that section of the projected anthology dealing with New York authors. Combined with this was some material included and incorporated from former book reviews.

In considering these sketches, it must be remembered that they were not the critical judgments of Poe himself, but for the most part merely his *obiter dicta,* and his record of the current impression of an author's importance at the time. The critical judgments, which creep in, will be found for the most part to have been taken from his previous book reviews, where a more formal evaluation of the writer's work had been attempted. These papers on the *literati,* because of the contemporary stir which they provoked, have been only too often confounded with the more serious part of Poe's criticism, and quoted against him. The truth is, they were hastily done, frankly journalistic sketches meant for contemporary consumption, and to make a noise. They were to fill the author's purse, and the pages of an anthology. This book was to sell by force of the personal interest of the writers included, and their friends, like other anthologies.

The series, from the standpoint of contemporary discussion and excitement, was an immense success. Poe treated the subjects of his sketches with an alarming degree of candor, and a personal knowledge that, in some cases, was felt to amount to a betrayal of conversational confidences. Naturally enough, the interest was at fever heat. There was no telling who might be the next to be elevated or gridironed, or what remarks made to Mr. Poe by somebody about anybody might not appear cunningly incorporated in the next number of *Godey's,* with consequent necessity for explanations or denials. Hence the series was an immense hit from the standpoint of the circulation manager, while the author was automatically elevated to the throne of judgment — with no appeal. For there was no other critic whose pen marched with so great authority and reputation for savage candor. There was a great flutter in all the hen roosts of the coteries.

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[758] See Poe to Ticknor, December 24, 1846,—from Fordham, text reproduced, page 725.

For the most part, Poe's judgments, such as they were, have been sustained. Such songsters as Willis, Halleck, Margaret Fuller, and Mrs. Embury were justly evaluated, and their now forgotten reputations discussed as they deserved. The too-current idea that these papers constituted a general and jealously caustic attack on his fellow writers, is entirely unjust to Poe. A great deal of praise is generally wisely distributed, as any critic must do when considering living authors from a contemporary standpoint. On the other hand, the clipping of wings amid the Plymouth Rocks and bantams, who essayed the eagle's flight, was salutary. Unfortunately, particularly for Poe, there were several exceptions in which the spleen of his personal grudges was allowed full sway. Briggs, against whom Poe certainly had no just complaint, but whose attitude during the episode of the *Broadway Journal* was anathema to Poe, came in for a tremendous doing-up, as did Lewis Gaylord Clark, the editor of the *Knickerbocker.* This magazine, not being hospitable to Poe, was therefore included by him with the *North American Review* as in a category beyond the pale. Clark was now repaid in full with compound interest.

> Mr. Clark once did me the honor to review my poems — I forgive him. . . . As the editor has no precise character, the magazine, as a matter of course can have none. When I say ' no precise character,' I mean that Mr. C., as a literary man, has about him no determinateness, no distinctiveness, no point — ; — an apple, in fact, or a pumpkin has more angles. He is as smooth as oil or a sermon from Dr. Hawkes; he is noticeable for nothing in the world except for the markedness by which he is noticeable for nothing.

This was not so pleasant as it might have been, but one can recover from being compared to an apple or a pumpkin. With the article on "Thomas Done Brown," there were no vegetable comparisons. The animal kingdom, in the person of a long-eared equine, was drawn upon, and Mr. English's personal appearance held up to ridicule:

> Mr. Brown had, for the motto on his magazine cover, the words of Richelieu —
>
> . . . Men call me cruel,
> I am not: — I am *just*.
>
> Here the two monosyllables " an ass " should have been appended. . . . I do not personally know him. About his personal appearance there is nothing remarkable — except that he exists in a perpetual state of vacillation between mustachio and goatee. In character a *windbeutel*.[759]

In addition to this, English was held up to the world as an ignoramus who could neither spell, nor write grammatically. Poe as a matter of fact, as we have seen, knew him well, too well in fact to feel comfortable. English knew a great deal about Poe's life in Philadelphia. Lane, who lived with English, and had assisted in getting out the last number of the *Broadway Journal,* says that when the poet was inebriated, English drove Poe frantic, probably by making fun at him. In Philadelphia, English had quarreled with a number of people and, on several occasions, been worsted in encounters, notably by Henry Beck Hirst (*sic*). It seems, he had taken some of the castigations rather tamely. Hence Poe dubbed him "Thomas Done Brown," and wrote him up in a manner vindictive, remembering his own humiliations when he was helpless. No man, who was not dead-alive, could have refrained from replying.

The truth is, English was a bit of a cad. In descending to meet him on his own ground, Poe had done himself a great wrong, and forgot that Thomas was not done so brown but that he might give Mr. Poe's goose a hot turn on the spit. He soon did so — and with telling affect — of which more hereafter.

The upshot of *The Literati* was that, in one way or another, Poe was one of the most talked of men among literary circles in the United States. Unfortunately, all this kind of thing had nothing to do with what real fame rests upon, *i.e.*, contributions to imaginative literature. *The Raven* had made Poe famous; *The Literati* had rendered him notorious. Mr. Godey felt called upon to issue a card in which he refused to bow to blandishments or threats. But the editor of the *Lady's Book* did not, we may be sure, care very much for the rôle of the fearless editor which had, thus gratuitously, been thrust upon him. In the meantime Poe existed, and did little more than that, on the proceeds of his articles.

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[759] "Thomas Done Brown"; Poe's article on English in *The Literati*. English was a doctor, lawyer, editor, poet, controversialist, and finally — a Congressman.

Behind all of this apparently facile social and literary activity, went on the private and momentous physical and imaginative life of the man. There was a growing melancholy, and a good cause for it. The curious cast of his temperament, which thrust upon him a growing and ever more overshadowing conviction of impending disaster, was now forced to behold its darkest forbodings being rapidly fulfilled in the ever hastening dissolution of Virginia. Her health during the last months of 1845, and the Winter of 1846, gave somber symptoms of the rapid approach of her death. Moving feebly through the rooms, or sitting weakly coughing in a chair by the man who so glibly characterized the *literati* in *Lady's Book* paragraphs, was the dying girl-wife, suffering, gasping, sweating, and bleeding.

The little rooms at 85 Amity Street, where Mrs. Clemm and Virginia lived, and the curious *literati* came to call, and then went away to gossip, were rapidly becoming intolerable. To Poe, there was something almost morbidly sequestered about his home. To admit strangers into the precincts, was to reveal to them, and to prying feline eyes, the rapt secrets of his inmost life. Poe could not bear it. Mrs. Clemm loved nothing better than her own house — and Virginia needed the bracing help of country breezes, and the soothing quiet of country air. Remembering the blessed solitude of the summer at Bloomingdale, where he had written *The Raven,* Poe once more made arrangements with the Brennans to take Mrs. Clemm and Virginia to the farm for a few weeks.

Sometime in April, 1846, Poe made a trip to Baltimore, the events of which are obscure. There was probably another lecture there, after which, upon his return, the family went to the country. There they remained until sometime later in the Spring, before removing to the vicinity of Turtle Bay. It was a good five-mile walk to the Brennans', or a long ride. Bus or steamboat fare was not always forthcoming, and it sometimes happened that Poe was unable to return at night to his fast sinking little wife. This seems to have been the great drawback to the sojourn on the farm, and at Fordham later on. Of Poe's consequently somewhat lonely life about New York during the Spring of 1846, only a few glimpses can be recaptured.

There seem to have been a good many calls upon Mrs. Osgood. Mrs. Mary Louise Shew was also resorted to, then, or later on, for hospitality, and sympathy. Mrs. Shew, who had great sympathy for Poe, had been a nurse for many years with hospital experience. She, more than anyone else, seems to have realized his true physical condition. She became the Poes' good angel at Fordham, and, in town, made her house a haven of refuge and rest. She was well known to able physicians, Dr. Mott, and John Wakefield Francis, M.D., whom Poe had commemorated in an article, on account of the Doctor's contributions to medical magazines. Dr. Francis was later called in to attend Poe, and frequently met him at the different salons of the *literati*. He was genial and liberal in his tendencies, and included, in his life of wide interests, an enthusiasm for literature, and the conversation of authors. Poe was helped by him at times of need, and has left a rather intimate and exceedingly cordial sketch of him in the papers of *The Literati:*

> . . . His person and manner was richly peculiar. He is short and stout, probably five feet eight in height, limbs of great muscularity and strength, the whole frame indicating prodigious vitality and energy — the latter is, in fact, the leading trait in his character. His head is large, massive — the features in keeping; complexion dark florid; eyes piercingly bright; mouth exceedingly mobile and expressive; hair gray, and worn in matted locks about the neck and shoulders — eyebrows to correspond, jagged and ponderous. His age is about fifty-eight. His general appearance is such as to arrest attention.
>
> His address is the most genial that can be conceived, its bonhommie irresistible. He stands habitually, with his head thrown back and his chest out; never waits for an introduction to anybody; slaps a perfect

stranger on the back and calls him ‘Doctor’ or ‘Learned Theban’; pats every lady on the head, and (if she is pretty and petite) designates her by some such title as ‘My Pocket Edition of the Lives of the Saints.’ His conversation proper is a sort of Roman punch made up of tragedy, comedy, and the broadest of all possible farce. He has a natural, felicitous flow of talk, always overswelling its boundaries and sweeping everything before it right and left. He is very earnest, intense, emphatic; thumps the table with his fists; shocks the nerves of the ladies. His forte, after all, is humor, the richest conceivable — a compound of Swift, Rabelais, and the clown in the pantomime. . . .

It is quite possible that this genial and wise old doctor, "whose professional duties and purse are always at the command of the needy," was called upon to give advice and help in the hopeless case of Virginia Poe. It is certain he did so in the case of her husband.[760]

Poe, now much talked about, because of the papers on the *literati*, and unfortunately, too, on account of his sick wife and Mrs. Osgood, was also to be found occasionally at *Frank's Place* "on Barclay Street where a convivial company gathered." In the early Winter of 1846, we hear of a dinner at the old *United States Hotel* on Fulton Street attended by Henry Ward Beecher, Dr. Francis Lister Hawkes — whose sermons Poe was now at some pains to proclaim boresome — and others.

February brought the last Valentine Day which Virginia was to know. At 15 Amity Street she received an envelope addressed in a well-known hand.[761]

Poe was now getting farther into the clutches of Mrs. "Estelle" Lewis of Brooklyn, who decorated her studio with a bust of Pallas presided over by a stuffed raven. She was known as "Stella." Her husband was a fairly prosperous lawyer, who indulged his wife in the funds necessary to purchase fame, and to run a salon in Brooklyn.[762]

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[760] Poe, in his reply to English, speaks of Dr. Francis as having intimate knowledge of the reasons for his (Poe's) drinking, and by inference, of Virginia's illness.

[761] *Century Magazine* — October, 1909.

[762] "Estelle's" real name was Sarah Anna. She scorned this baptismal handicap in the literary race for fame, and even persuaded her husband to pay Griswold to make the alteration in a complimentary article. An acrostic written by Poe to "Sarah Anna" did not produce the desired effect upon "Stella."

Sometime in the early Spring of 1846 — the second stay at Bloomingdale was a short one — Poe again moved his wife and Mrs. Clemm to another secluded boarding place, then situated in a country district at the foot of Forty-seventh Street on the East River, in a section known as Turtle Bay.[763]

This change again brought Virginia and Mrs. Clemm nearer to town, and, at the same time, enabled Poe to walk conveniently to the city for what calls he had to pay, or the slack business he had to transact. Poverty, a dire pennilessness, was now once more oppressively bearing down upon him. The papers in *Godey's* could have done little more than pay the board. What the Poes contrived to live upon, how Mrs. Clemm provided medicines and the necessary dainties for Virginia, is a mystery of which only she knew the ramifications.

With Turtle Bay began that period of sickness, calamity, delirium, and desire for sequestration from the world, which lasted from the Summer of 1846 through the Fordham episode, up into the Winter of 1848. It would seem as if Poe had withdrawn as much as possible from gratuitous human contact in order to spend the last days with Virginia, to see her through the inevitable last agony, to nurse his own jangled nerves, and to ponder upon the primordial nature of the universe! Such was the strange *mélange* of the experiences and events about to follow. Yet he was by no means able to suffer, recuperate, and ponder undisturbed. The period of hermitage at Turtle Bay and Fordham was intruded upon by some of the most lamentable and belittling episodes of the poet's life.

He was, indeed, helplessly in the clutch of psychic and worldly circumstances, half crazed at the thought of losing Virginia. Nevertheless, the inevitable immediate presence of the shadow on his threshold warned him of the release to come, and of the implications which must follow. In a short while, she, who had been at once his despair and consolation, would be no more. The writing in all its glowing and shadowed characters was even now being traced on the wall. He was greatly attracted by Mrs. Osgood. Of that there can be no doubt. Yet Mrs. Osgood was married. With the passing of Virginia, he would be released only to confront a new problem. One to which, no matter who the person was that embodied it, there seemed to be no solution. Then, too, he craved comfort, rest, and sympathy, the peculiar spiritual comradeship and understanding which he found only in women.

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[763] The Brennans at Bloomingdale seem to have had something to do with recommending the Poes to former friends, both at Turtle Bay and Fordham. Mrs. Brennan and her daughter Martha drove Mrs. Clemm about the country a good deal.

It is not hard to understand why this man, under all of these strange pressures and long continued stresses, — the slowly stretching wires of inmost being that were tightened and tightened as the years went on, that every turn of the screw made more vibrant and brought a little nearer the breaking point, — it is not hard to understand why he sometimes felt himself to be going mad. Indeed, it is more difficult to understand why he did not go entirely insane. That, from time to time, he attempted to relieve the stress on the now nearly snapping cords and harp strings, by reverting to drugs and alcohol, seems now, if it ever could be, to have been excusable. Never was there a more delicate or more tormented being that had cried out so long, and so unsuccessfully for surcease, that had longed for companionship and found none.

The Summer of 1846 was one of the hottest that had ever been known. As the sweltering May and June days settled down upon Turtle Bay, and over the steepled town about the lower end of Manhattan, — the dusty roads, baking brick side-walks, awnings, and the sleepy rumble of clumsy busses that was then New York, — the *literati* began to withdraw to their several summer pagodas. Mr. Poe was left more and more alone with his agonies and cogitations, while the heat lightning flashed, and the distant thunder rolled.

The Poes, at Turtle Bay, boarded near to the farm of a Mr. John L. Miller, a large, shaded farmhouse, and its environs of several acres planted with orchards that stretched along the shores of the East River. Here in the Spring days, Mrs. Clemm, impeccable as ever, neat, but sad, desirous of sharing her troubles with sympathetic gossips, came to sit in the parlor, or upon the verandah, to watch the Sound steamers go by, and to tell her troubles, very real ones, to Mrs. Miller. Poe sometimes came with her. Virginia was generally too feeble to go out. Sarah, Mrs. Miller's little girl, remembered.[764]

> When I was a little girl we lived in a house facing Turtle Bay, on the East River, near the present 47th Street. Among our nearest neighbors was a charming family . . . consisting of Mr. Poe, his wife Virginia, and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm. Poor Virginia, was very ill, at the time and I never saw her leave home. Poe and Mrs. Clemm would frequently call on us. He would also run over every little while to ask my father to lend him our row-boat, and then he would enjoy himself pulling at the oars over to the little islands just south of Blackwell's Island, for his afternoon swim.
>
> Mrs. Clemm and my mother soon became the best of friends, and she found mother a most sympathetic listener to all her sad tales of poverty and want. I would often see her shedding tears as they talked. As I recall her she always seemed so wonderfully neat and orderly, and invariably wore a full white collar around her neck. . . .

This personification of placidity and domestic order, this epitome of dameliness and respectability, from which the burdens of Promethean sorrows wrung reluctant tears, is one of the enormous contrasts, one of those almost ghostly enigmas which fate seems to have thrust, in a spirit of sardonic mischief or ironical sympathy, into the life cycle of Edgar Allan Poe. During his youth, he had been impossibly linked with the strongest guardian that ever a poet had; in later life Maria Clemm had, as if in compensation, been mercifully provided. She remained the only constant factor of all the years of Poe's manhood. Despised, deprecated, and sometimes ridiculed, a poor, boresome, but saintly old woman, she continued her devotion of a lifetime by her domestic epilogue and eulogy when he died.

All who saw Mrs. Clemm during Poe's lifetime, men, women and children, were impressed by an orderliness, an intense cleanliness, a preternatural neatness in her appearance, which, as the record is assembled and grows, becomes spiritual rather than physical in its implications. It was she who introduced into the career of this man, whose life had been a chaos of passion since his birth, that essential quality of orderly continuity, and cleanly comfort without which he must soon have perished miserably, or existed more pathetically than Lazarus himself. When the imagination and toil of genius were insufficient to wring from obstinate hands and pockets even the paltry coppers that fall willingly to the blind man's whine, Maria Clemm went forth with her basket and returned sadly but triumphantly to place the proceeds of her noble beggary before her fainting son and dying daughter.

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[764] *Bulletin* of the North Side (Bronx) Board of Trade for January, 1909,— Poe Memorial Issue.

It is impossible to exaggerate the majestic, because invisible, abnegations and ministrations of Mrs. Clemm. At evening the fields have seen her, armed with a spade, digging in the twilight among the turnips which farmers had planted to feed to cows in the winter-time, filling her basket with humble, earthy loot to make soup for her wonderful Eddie and her poor Virginia. At Fordham, even this resource failed, and she was seen in the very early mornings by the neighbors, walking down secret country lanes, culling the yellow dandelions to make a salad, or a mess of " greens " for Edgar Allan Poe.

In the immense and catholic scheme of things, which requires and insists upon the widest possible variations in the scale of human character, Edgar Poe and Maria Clemm, although spiritual hemispheres apart, were brought together, yoked as it were, by Virginia, into an effectual, though astonishing team. Under the occasional lyric ecstasies and majestic dirges that her son-in-law caught up, from time to time, in poetry or prose, behind the harmony that he wrung magnificently out of conflict and chaos, is the inaudible but fundamental monotone of this woman's cherishing affection.

Yet she must not be regarded as some simple saint, blindly devoted to the devastating ideal of unintelligent self-sacrifice. She was always, it seems, doing the most common-sense thing under the circumstances, or finding the only way that there was out of a difficulty. In the Spring of 1846, both the condition of Virginia's health and Israfel's difficulties and misfortunes made some removal to a more remote scene desirable. Mrs. Clemm must have longed for a place where her daughter could die in peace, and her son might live with some dignity — where their poverty would not be spied upon, and their tragedies be made the theme of idle gossip. In all this Poe would have heartily concurred. Sometime, about the end of May, 1846, they moved to the Fordham cottage. Little Sarah Miller remembered the Poes leaving Turtle Bay, and her visit to Fordham soon afterward. The cherry trees were in bloom —

> In the midst of their friendship they came and told us they were going to move to a distant place called Fordham, where they had rented a little cottage, feeling sure the pure country air would do Mrs. Poe a world of good. Very soon a cordial invitation arrived for us all to come and take luncheon, which was very daintily served on the first floor. As I remember, the front door led directly into the apartment. I recall most clearly their bringing me a small wooden box to sit on at the table, instead of a chair. Always kind and smiling and very fond of children, Poe's handsome and attractive appearance always impressed me. He would come up to me and patting me on the shoulder, tell me I was a nice little girl. One of the most prized treasures is a small Chinese puzzle of carved ivory given to me by Poe himself.[764]

This dinner with the Turtle Bay Millers, — little Sarah, wide-eyed and smiling on a box — is one of the first glimpses to be had of the Poes at Fordham. One cannot help wondering what Poe thought, looking at the child sitting at the table where there had never been any necessity to provide high-chairs for children. The cat was there; we hear of her shortly afterward, lying upon Virginia's hollow bosom. Some puzzles cannot be given away. Poverty, for instance! A bed had been left behind at Turtle Bay in lieu of board. And one wonders, too, just how they *did* furnish the cottage.[765]

It was a very pleasant, a humble, but a beautiful little place. It would have been an ideal setting for a pastoral. There was the rose-embowered, the blossom-showered cottage of a poet; chimes

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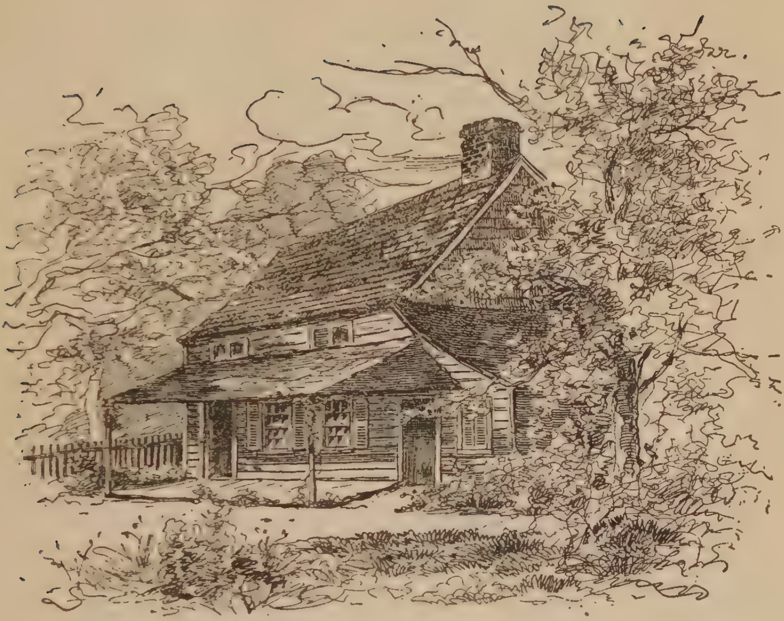
[765] Kindly attempts by biographers to furnish the Fordham cottage in May, 1846, with funds received from the libel suit settled in February, 1847, are hardly ingenious, to say the least. The *opinion* of the author is, that the cottage was not in any sense "furnished," until Mrs. Shew gave the Poes the articles contributed by charity, in December, 1846, and after. See Mrs. Weiss for the description of articles pawned by Mrs. Clemm.



Poe's Cottage at Fordham

Still preserved in Poe Park, Fordham, New York City

From a sketch made before its removal to the present site

from a neighboring monastery sounding across the fields; cloudy woods and distant, sun-flashing waterways; the lulling sound of cowbells nearing home at twilight.

The stage setting for the great American tragedy was enormously, almost cosmically ironical. The corpse-like Virginia, and the pale brow of madness were about to be wreathed in honeysuckle and roses. Through the months of her gasping, and above the busy noise of her husband's occasional delirium, sounded the soothing boom of greedy bees. The contrast of the psychic drama and the physical scenery could only have been conceived by that exquisite lord of tragedy, Reality.

Shortly after the removal to Fordham, Poe departed on a business trip which ended in bitter disappointment. Then the fitness of the bucolic scenery was completely complemented by the arrival from Richmond, on a family visit, of the eccentric and slightly childish sister, Rosalie. Rosalie was a great trial to Mrs. Clemm. She was childish, and wilful, and yet possessed of a certain shrewdness, so often conferred upon such children of the moon, as if by way of compensation. She observed, she talked; and Mrs. Clemm feared her tongue. Rosalie, on her part, did not care very much for "Aunty Clemm." She preferred to sit chattering idly by the bedside or near the chair of Virginia [766] while Poe was in town.

Of some unsuccessful business interview and of the high hopes aroused in vain, this, the only letter known to have been sent by Poe to Virginia, is a memorial:

June 12, 1846.

MY DEAR HEART — MY DEAR VIRGINIA, — Our mother will explain to you why I stay away from you this night. I trust the interview I am promised will result in some substantial good for me — for your dear sake and hers — keep up your heart in all hopefulness and trust yet a little longer. On my last great disappointment I should have lost my courage but for you — my little darling wife. You are my greatest and only stimulus now, to battle with this uncongenial, unsatisfactory, and ungrateful life.

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[766] The character of Rosalie Poe has been greatly misunderstood by several biographers, who have fastened upon her the names of "idiot," "imbecile," and so forth. Rosalie was a little eccentric — undeveloped. This was later made worse by misfortunes sufficient to turn the head of many a normal old woman. She wrote a fair letter, taught writing in a school in Richmond, and understood, far too well, what was going on at Fordham, to please Mrs. Clemm. In 1846, Rose was still living with the Mackenzies in Richmond. Mrs. Clemm put her to sewing while she stayed at the cottage. See Mrs. Clemm's letters to Rosalie, also Mrs. Weiss, *Home Life of Poe.*

I shall be with you to-morrow . . . P.M., and be assured until I see you I will keep in loving remembrance your last words, and your fervent prayer!

Sleep well, and may God grant you a peaceful summer with your devoted Edgar.[767]

The attempt to show that this letter was written just prior to an interview with Mrs. Osgood is not borne out by the order of events that followed. The reference, in the letter itself, to "substantial good" is palpably one of financial import.[768] The real interpretation is the obvious one. It is one of grief, anxiety and affectionate solicitude in ink.

Mrs. Clemm had to send money to Poe for his return. He was scolded, says Rosalie, and then put to bed for a night of delirium. He was in a terrible way; he cried out, *and demanded morphine.* One catches other glimpses of him about New York, trying to place articles, or writing again about the *Stylus* — always unsuccessfully.

Yet, that Poe forecasted and ever dramatized the departure of Virginia, there can be little doubt, for it was at the time of this early Summer visit, in 1846, that we hear from Rosalie of *Annabel Lee*. She definitely remembered having heard it read. After Poe's death there were a host of lady candidates, each claiming in a long, tedious, angry, and jealous correspondence with Poe's English biographer, Ingram, to be the only genuine and original "Annabel." In so far as any of Poe's vague heroines can be traced to any definite personality of the world of reality, it may be said, in passing, that his wife Virginia is more closely shadowed forth in the poem than anyone else. "I was a child, and she was a child," and "our love — it was stronger by far than the love of those who were older than we — of many far wiser than we" — seems to refer beyond cavil to the strange incidents of his marriage to a *child,* and the opposition of relatives. In this poem is the long dirge of the waves of Sullivan's Island during the years he walked its beaches alone, and the death of Virginia at Fordham. In the Summer of 1846, all of this was in his past, or in the near future by inevitable implication. It was a magnificent, and lyrical rendering, a dirgelike expression of his own and Virginia's tragedy.

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[767] Ingram, — from the *Griswold Collection,* also published by Woodberry and Harrison.

[768] See Mrs. Weiss, *Home Life of Poe,* for a doubtful interpretation of this letter.

Sixteen miles from the city was no barrier at all to the visitations of curiosity. There were trains on the Harlem Railroad, stages, and various of the starry sisterhood possessed well-to-do husbands and carriages. Callers were not infrequent. Many were desirous of favorable reviews or criticism from Mr. Poe. From some of these women, Mrs. Clemm had borrowed money, so little favors from "Eddie" were now in order.[769] One could also appear gracefully by bringing a basket for that poor darling, Mrs. Poe — and Mrs. Clemm, who was lonely, *did* like to gossip. Great trouble for Poe ensued.

Mrs. Gove was an occasional visitor. Mrs. "Estelle" Lewis of the Brooklyn salon was frequently to be found seated in Mrs. Clemm's Fordham kitchen.[770] Her husband had given Poe "$100" to revise his wife's verses — the critical remarks which followed were, also expected, to be tempered by so salubrious a wind. All of this was exasperating. Mrs. Oakes Smith, it seems, had also used the lever of her hospitality, and probable favors to Mrs. Clemm, to extract an article from the "Raven" in which the two hundred verses of her poem on *The Sinless Child* were vaguely eulogized through a veil of gauzy irony.

> The execution of the Sinless Child is as we have already said inferior to its conception.

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[769] It must be remembered that Mrs. Clemm was haunted by the horror of going to the poor-house, a fate which she escaped by going to a church home. She mentions the poor-house in letters to Rosalie, in 1846.

[770] From later correspondence between Mrs. Houghton and Mrs. Whitman, it is quite evident that "Stella" got hold of Poe through Mrs. Clemm, and that he, at first, detested her. Poe also spoke bitterly to Mrs. Gove of the reviews wrung from him by lucre, and his terrible misery.

The quotations, when removed from the context, were excellent.

Mrs. Smith was, we learn, a child of nature. Birds lit upon her fingers. Her poem contained a sinless type of passion which intrigued Poe, who, between the millstones of his gratitude and specialized admiration, contrived to grind out of chaff the meal of praise, mixed with the broken glass of irony.

One day in June, Mrs. Clemm — Poe it appears was absent — was visited by an authoress, and poetess, a certain Mrs. Elizabeth Frieze Lummis Ellet. Mrs. Ellet had learned her gossip's trade in the most talented school for scandal on the continent. Her talk with Mrs. Clemm was evidently most pumping, alarming, and consoling, and Mrs. Clemm soon made the mistake of reading to her some of the sugar-and-spice letters of Mrs. Osgood. In New York, sixteen miles away, there was an explosion in the literary tea pot.

Mrs. Osgood became greatly alarmed, more alarmed than ever. She had, it seems, already ceased to see Poe, through fear of gossip, and the new outbreak was doubly unwelcome. A committee of the *literati,* headed by Mrs. Elizabeth Frieze Lummis Ellet, was commissioned by Mrs. Osgood, " about the time the cherry trees bloomed," to call upon Poe and to demand her letters. Many of the starry ones, who had also written letters, must have been somewhat disturbed to learn that they were being read aloud to the sisterhood by Mrs. Clemm.

Mr. Poe was considerably nettled. He was *not* glad to see the commission of Mrs. Ellet, Margaret Fuller, and Miss Lynch, and evidently said so, hinting that Mrs. Ellet might be equally solicitous about her own correspondence. She was. The bundle of Mrs. Osgood's letters was returned instantly, and the committee withdrew bearing them back to New York. The talk went on, however.

After the irate committee left, Poe, who was sorry that his anger had led him to make an unchivalric remark to Mrs. Ellet, took her letters and left them at her door. There is no doubt that in all this affair there was little else than gossip, and a genuine malignity on the part of Mrs. Ellet, who soon afterward denied that she had received her letters.

Mr. Lummis, Mrs. Ellet's brother, next appeared, demanding his sister's letters from Poe. He doubted, or did not know that they had been returned. Mrs. Ellet naturally remained reticent. Poe's sacred word was doubted, and many hard things said about Mrs. Osgood. Mr. Lummis was soon said to be going about New York, with his coat-tail full of pistols, looking for Poe. A duel, then not at all unusual in literary and political circles, was in order. Mr. Poe called upon Mr. Thomas Dunn English at his and T. H. Lane's apartment at 304 Broadway, in a very excited state, to ask Mr. English to be his second in the quarrel.

Poe was probably in debt to English for sums due upon the demise of the *Broadway Journal,* and English had also been held up to ridicule by Poe in *Godey's* in the sketches of the *literati.*[771] In January, 1846, Poe, while intoxicated, had had a row with English, probably over the death of the *Journal,* in which violence had been resorted to. Lane says that English was entirely exasperating to Poe when the latter was in his cups. It was upon Mr. English whom Poe now called to do him the good offices of a friend! Strangely enough, John H. Tyler, who must have heard of similar singular scenes in Washington upon Poe's visit there, was present when Poe arrived. Mr. English's account follows.[772]

> Mr. Poe having been guilty of some most ungentlemanly conduct, while in a state of intoxication, I was obliged to treat him with discourtesy. Sometime after this, he came to my chambers, in my absence in search of me. He found there, a nephew of one of our ex-presidents. To that gentleman he stated, that he desired to see me in order to apologize to me for his conduct. I entered shortly after, when he tendered me an apology and his hand. The former I accepted, the latter I refused. He told me that he came to beg my pardon, because he wished me to do him a favor. Amused at this novel reason for an apology, I replied that I would do the favor, with pleasure, if possible, but not on the score of friendship. He said that though his friendship was of little service his enmity might be dangerous. To this I rejoined that I shunned his friendship and despised his enmity. He beseeched a private conversation so abjectly, that, finally, moved by his humble entreaty,

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[771] Poe denied his being in debt to English in the reply in the Philadelphia *Spirit of the Times,* July 10, 1846.

[772] The text of the original articles in the *New York Mirror* is here used by the courtesy of John T. Snyder, Esq., who supplied the author with the originals in his possession.

> I accorded it. Then he told me that he had villified a certain well known and esteemed authoress, of the South, (*Mrs. Ellet*) then on a visit to New York, that he had accused her of having written letters to him which compromised her reputation; and that her brother (her husband being absent) had threatened his life unless he produced the letters named. He begged me for God's sake to stand his friend, as he expected to be challenged. I refused, because I was not willing to mix myself in his affairs, and because having once before done so, I had found him at the critical moment, to be an abject poltroon. These reasons I told him. He then begged the loan of a pistol to defend himself against an attack. This request I refused, saying that his surest defence was a retraction of unfounded charges. He at last grew exasperated and using offensive language, was expelled from the room. . . .

So much for Mr. English's statement of the case in the *New York Mirror*. Unfortunately for that gentleman, although justly exasperated, his statement was mixed with an alloy which lightens considerably the pure gold of truth. From other passages in his career, it is known that he was an insufferable cock on his own dung hill; that he enjoyed the vituperation of controversy, and shunned the incidents of a fair fight. He had long been friends with Poe, who had helped to get out English's paper in Philadelphia when the latter was himself on a spree, and his statement of Poe's having been a poltroon was the exact reverse of the fact.

He might, therefore, have overlooked the episode in January. An old acquaintance shattered in nerves, hounded and pursued over a quarrel initiated by gossips, came to his house humbling his pride in his extremity, and holding out his hand. Mr. English accepted the apology but would not take the hand, and boasted of it in print. Poe was no doubt greatly shaken, and overrated Mr. Lummis; English would not involve himself where a real encounter threatened. He even refused, as a careful lawyer, to loan Poe a pistol.[773] In the quarrel which followed, he did not merely put Poe out of the door, but beat him up first, after having his own face pummeled in the encounter. Poe was led out by Professor Ackerman, and was in bed for some days afterward, in the usual state of collapse to which any kind of excitement, love, stimulants, or anger reduced him. He was, in fact, a complete nervous wreck. Dr. Francis, realizing his condition, carried a letter to Lummis, who by this time must have found out that his sister after all had her letters.

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[773] See also English writing October 29, 1906, in the *Independent*. "One word led to another and he (Poe) rushed toward me in a menacing manner."

Mrs. Osgood went to Albany, and the affair was hushed up. "Poe," says English, "fled the city." This meant that Poe returned to Fordham, where he lived. Mr. English remained, only to make a necessary temporary exit later. He had received a very sharp and unmannerly peck from the beak of the "Raven" in *Godey's*, and now discovered, in his own replies, some of the qualities of the bill of the vulture. On May 30, 1846, the *New York Mirror* had carried T. D. English's reply to the *Literati* paper in which he used the knowledge acquired during his intimate contact with Poe to sneer, not without considerable force, at Poe's own affectations of learning.

> Mr. Poe's articles were to have still greater currency given them by uniting the *Godey's Book* with *Arthur's Magazine* and publishing them with the latest Paris fashions, Americanized and expressed from Paris. A still greater impetus was to be given to Mr. Poe's opinions; they were even to be accompanied with autographs of the New York *Literati*. It is said that all Division Street was put in an uproar by this tremendous announcement, and two milliner's apprentices never slept a wink one whole night, for thinking about it. Some of the students in Dr. Arthur's grammar school made a pilgrimage to Bloomingdale to gaze upon the asylum where Mr. Poe was reported to be confined, in consequence of his immense mental efforts having turned his brain . . . (*and so on through several columns*) —
>
> To conclude, after the fashion of our Thersitical Magazinist, Mr. Poe is about 39. He may be more or less. If neither more nor less, we should say he was decidedly 39. But of this we are not certain. In height he is about 5 feet 1 or two inches, perhaps 2 inches and a half. His face is pale and rather thin; eyes gray, watery, and always dull; nose rather prominent, pointed and sharp; nostrils wide; hair thin and cropped short; mouth not very well chiselled, nor very sweet, his tongue shows itself unpleasantly when he speaks earnestly, and seems too large for his mouth; teeth indifferent; forehead rather broad, and in the region of ideality decidedly large, but low, and in that part where phrenology places conscientiousness and the group of moral sentiments it is quite flat; chin narrow and pointed, which gives his head, upon the whole, a balloonish appearance, which may account for his supposed

light-headedness; he generally carries his head upright like a fugleman on drill, but sometimes it droops considerably. His address is gentlemanly and agreeable at first, but it soon wears off and leaves a different impression after becoming acquainted with him; his walk is quick and jerking, sometimes waving, describing that peculiar figure in geometry denominated by Euclid, we think, but it may be Professor Farrar of Cambridge, Virginia fence. In dress he affects the tailor at times, and at times the cobbler, being in fact excessively nice or excessively something else. *His hands are singularly small, resembling birds claws;* his person slender; weight about 110 or 115 pounds, perhaps the latter; his study has not many of the Magliabechian characteristics, the shelves being filled mainly with ladies magazines; he is supposed to be a contributor to the *Knickerbocker,* but of this nothing certain is known; he is the author of *Politian,* a drama, to which Prof. Longfellow is largely indebted, it is said by Mr. Poe, for many of his ideas. Mr. Poe goes much into society, but what society we cannot positively say; he formerly lived at West Point; his present place of residence is unknown. He is married.[772]

Through the stifling days of June and July, while the heat lightning continued to flicker, the stage thunder of the controversy rolled on. On June 23, in reply to some further proddings, the following appeared as a paid card in the *New York Mirror:*

THE WAR
OF
THE LITERATI

MR. ENGLISH'S REPLY
TO
MR. POE

A TERRIFIC REJOINDER!

The War of the Literati — We publish the following terrific rejoinder of one of Mr. Poe's abused literati, with a twinge of pity for the object of its severity. But as Mr. Godey, 'for a consideration,' lends the use of his battery for an attack on the one side, it is but fair that we allow our friends an opportunity to exercise a little 'self-defence' on the other

(A CARD)

MR. ENGLISH'S REPLY TO MR. POE

As I have not, of late replied to attacks made upon me through the public press, I can easily afford to make an exception, and still keep my rule a general one. A Mr. Edgar A. Poe, has been engaged for some time past in giving to the public, through the medium of the *Lady's Book,* sketches of what he facetiously calls *The Literati of New York City*. These he names by way of distinction, I presume, from his ordinary writings, ' honest opinions.' He honors me by including me in the very numerous and remarkably august body he affects to describe. Others have converted the paper on which his sketches are printed to its legitimate use — like to like — but as he seems to covet a notice from me, he shall be gratified.

Mr. Poe states in his article, ' I do not personally know Mr. English.' That he does not know me is not a matter of wonder. The severe treatment he received at my hands for brutal and dastardly conduct, rendered it necessary for him if possible, to forget my existence. Unfortunately, I know him; and by the blessing of God, and the assistance of a grey-goose quill, my design is to make the public know him also.

I know Mr. Poe by a succession of his acts — one of which is rather costly. I hold Mr. Poe's acknowledgement for a sum of money which he obtained of me under false pretences. As I stand in need of it at this time, I am content he should forget to know me, provided he acquits himself of the money he owes me. I ask no interest, in lieu of which I am willing to credit him with the sound cuffing I gave him when I last saw him.

Another act of his gave me some knowledge of him. A merchant of this city had accused him of committing forgery. He consulted me on the mode of punishing his accuser, and as he was afraid to challenge him to the field, or chastise him personally, I suggested a legal prosecution as his sole remedy. At his request, I obtained a counsellor who was willing, as a compliment to me, to conduct his suit without the customary retaining fee. But, though so eager at first to commence proceedings, he dropped the matter altogether, when the time came for him to act — thus virtually admitting the truth of the charge.

As the matter contained in the last paragraph quoted above was libelous, the publisher, Fuller, tried to guard himself, by the introductory notice, a precaution which was futile. Poe replied in the Philadelphia *Spirit of the Times* on July 10, 1846:

To THE PUBLIC. — A long and serious illness of such character as to render quiet and perfect seclusion in the country of vital importance, has hitherto prevented me from seeing an article headed *The War of the Literati. . . .*

Full justice was done to the occasion in Poe's characteristic style. He was unable to defend himself fully against English's story of his conduct when intoxicated, but contributed enough biographical material about English to sufficiently demonstrate his character. Of his own weakness he remarks:

> The errors and frailties which I deplore, it cannot at least be asserted that I have been the coward to deny. Never, even, have I made attempt at extenuating a weakness which is (or by the blessing of God, *was*) a calamity, although those who did not know me intimately had little reason to regard it as other than a crime. For, indeed, had my pride, or that of my family permitted, there was much — very much — there was everything to be offered in extenuation.

The charge of forgery was completely denied. Park Benjamin had quoted the alleged remark of a New York merchant, Edward J. Thomas of Broad Street, to English who had rashly rushed into print. Poe dispatched a letter to Thomas who replied:

New York, *July* 5, 1845.

E. A. POE, *Esq.*, New York

DEAR SIR, — I had hoped ere this to have seen you, but as you have not called, and as I may soon be out of the city, I desire to say to you that, after repeated effort, I saw the person on Friday evening last, from whom the report originated to which you referred in your call at my office. (The contemptuous silence in respect to the communication sent through Mr. E. will be observed). He denies it *in toto* — says he does not know it and never said so — and it undoubtedly arose from the misunderstanding of some word used. It gives me pleasure thus to trace it, and still more to find it destitute of foundation in truth, as I thought would be the case. I have told Mr. Benjamin the result of my inquiries, and shall do so to —— (the lady referred to as the common friend) by a very early opportunity — the only two persons who know anything of the matter, as far as I know.

I, am Sir, very truly
Your friend and obed't. St.
(*Signed*) EDWARD J. THOMAS[774]

"These are the facts which, in a court of justice, I propose to demonstrate," says Poe — and he did so. The *New York Mirror* was sued, for libel. The case came to trial February 22, 1847, before Justice Samuel Jones of the Superior (State) Court. English did not appear for the *Mirror,* and the verdict went to Poe who received $225 damages and costs. The total sum amounted to $326.48. Out of this, E. L. Faucher, Poe's attorney, received, it is said, a good fat fee. This was after the death of Virginia at Fordham.

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[774] Printed in Poe's reply to English in the *Spirit of the Times.*

The most unfortunate part of the whole miserable affair was, that largely due to unnecessary attacks on English in *Godey's,* the weaknesses of "Israfel" had been advertised to the world. It was the English controversy, more than any other, which tarnished Poe's good name. Had it not been for that, we should now hear very much less about "Poe's drinking." The weaknesses of many another literary man, kept private, have been forgotten. The failings of Poe were trumpeted, and reprinted in a chain of little newspapers and magazines whose editors dealt out the vindictive journalistic personalities of an era when neighborhood gossip was news. It is hard now to get a perspective on the havoc which this kind of thing wrought upon so sensitive, and so easily irritated a nature as Poe's.

> There was not a single day in (the) year that he did not receive, through the post anonymous letters from cowardly villains which so harrowed up his feelings that he at length, was driven to the firm belief that the whole world of Humanity was nothing less than the veritable devil himself tormenting him here on earth for nothing.[775]

One can easily trace, in this, the germs of a conviction of persecution as this went on from year to year.

> Were I now called upon from the bottom of my heart, to give a faithful exhibition of this man's real nature, I would say that he was the Incarnation of the Greek Prometheus chained to the Mount Caucasus of demi-civilized Humanity, with the black Vulture of Envy, feeding on his self-replenished heart; while upon his trembling lips sat enthroned the most eloquent persuasion alternating with the bitterest, triumphant and God-like scorn. . . .[775]

This estimate was made by Thomas Holley Chivers who knew Poe well, and who had visited him on July 8, 1845, at 195 Broadway. From Fordham, on July 22, 1846, Poe wrote Chivers a significant letter, only a small part of which is here given.

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[775] Thomas Holley Chivers, quoted by Prof. Woodberry in the *Century Magazine,* February, 1903.

> I am living out of town about 13 miles, at a village called Fordham, on the railroad leading north. We are in a snug little cottage, keeping house, and would be very comfortable but that I have been for a long time dreadfully ill. I am getting better, however, altho slowly, and shall get well. In the meantime the flocks of little birds of prey that always take the opportunity to peck at a sick fowl of larger dimensions, have been endeavoring with all their power given them to effect my ruin. My dreadful poverty, also has given them every advantage. In fact, my dear friend, I have been driven to the very gates of despair more dreadful than death, and I had not even one friend, out (*side*) of my family, with whom to advise. What would I have not given for the kind pressure of your hand. . . .
>
> Let not anything in this letter impress you with the belief that I *despair* even of worldly prosperity. On the contrary although I feel ill, and ground into the very dust with poverty, there is a sweet hope in the bottom of my soul. . . .[776]

We also learn, in this letter, that Poe had not been contributing to the magazines since February, 1846, and that the money received from Godey had long ago been exhausted.[765]

Of the life led by Poe and his family about Fordham, of the contemporary conditions of the neighborhood, and of its appearance and the location of the cottage itself, many carefully authenticated documents, and much testimony remains.[777]

Fordham was a sleepy little village, in the 1840s, strung out along the Kingsbridge Road, the old stage line northward. The place dated from a New York manor, created in 1676. When the Poes moved there, it was just beginning to feel the influx of families from New York. The Lorillards and others already had summer homes in the neighborhood, and the Roman Catholic College of St. John had been built nearby on Rose Hill. A station had recently been constructed to take care of the two trains daily on the Harlem Railroad at Williamsbridge, a mile and a half to the north. There was not even a post office. Poe had to walk for his mail about a mile, to West Farms.

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[776] Prof. Woodberry publishes the whole letter in the *Century Magazine* for February, 1903.

[777] Descriptions of the cottage and the life led at Fordham by Poe and his family come from *Transactions of the Bronx Society of Arts, Sciences and History*, vol. I, part V; *The Poe Cottage at Fordham*, R. G. Bolton; reminiscences attributed (correctly) to Mrs. Gove Nichols, the *Sixpenny Magazine*, February, 1863; Items: *New York Sun*, October 3, 1915; Church Records of Fordham and West Farms. " Poe's Mary," see note No. 422; pamphlets and material available at the Poe cottage at Fordham; *Boston Herald*, January 20, 1909; *Appleton's Journal*, July 18, 1874; the *Book Buyer* for January, 1903; maps, street plans, and several clippings and letters loaned the author by collectors, not available for reference; bill for the widening of the Kingsbridge Road, *New York State Archives;* Petition of the Poe Memorial Association to the Legislature and Governor of New York, April 8, 1896, etc., etc. Also obviously autobiographical descriptions in *Landor's Cottage*, and other stories by Poe. Also letters of Mrs. Shew in the *Ingram Correspondence* at the University of Virginia. Personal visits to the Poe cottage.

The cottage occupied a triangular plot of ground of about an acre where the Kingsbridge Road began to turn east up to Fordham, at present marked by the line of East One Hundred Ninety-second Street. It was not a " Dutch Cottage," as it has so often been described, but a simple, frame, workman's dwelling built when the colonial influence still prevailed, some time after the Revolution, as the hand-cut laths, and nails, and the mud plaster employed in its construction show. It seems to have been erected a little previous to 1816. The property in 1846 was owned by a neighboring farmer, a member of the Fordham Dutch Reformed Church, who, in the Spring of 1846, leased it to Poe.

The little house had broad paneled doors and small-paned windows. There were four rooms, two on each floor, a kitchen with an open fireplace, added soon after the building was erected, and a cow-shed lean-to.

In front, there was a small porch. Poe himself describes " the pillars of the piazza enwreathed in jasmine, and sweet honeysuckle — the numerous pots of gorgeous flowers, the vivid green of the tulip tree leaves that partially overshadowed the cottage . . . the large, flat, irregular slabs of granite . . . imbedded in delicious turf not nicely adapted, but with velvety sod filling frequent intervals between the stones (leading) hither and thither from the house." In the poet's day the entire dwelling seems to have been covered with the broad, dark-pine shingles, then common.

The main room on the ground floor was the parlor where Poe wrote. " The more substantial furniture consisted of a round table, a few chairs (including a large rocking chair) and a sofa or rather settee . . . its material was plain maple painted a creamy white slightly understriped with green." Poe also speaks in *Landor's Cottage,* evidently from life, of a vase of blooming flowers on the parlor table and "the fireplace nearly filled with a vase of brilliant geraniums." There were more flowers, vases on the shelves and mantel, and clustered violets about the windows. Such was the room in which he wrote in the summer days. The family evidently ate, after the manner of rural dwellers, in the kitchen.

Next to the parlor was a cubby-hole of a bedroom which Mrs. Clemm at first occupied, but into which Virginia was brought to be nursed later. Here she died. The two garret rooms were evidently Poe's and Virginia's. The east attic room was, at first, occupied by Virginia before the cold weather came, as her bedstead now shows the knobs cut off on one side, in order to allow it to fit under the low eaves. Poe's own room was next to Virginia's in the garret, "a low, cramped chamber, lighted by little square windows like portholes." [778] The furnishings were poverty stricken, but, as always, Mrs. Clemm was able to make the place gleaming and spotless. The walls were not papered, but covered with a lime wash. A little winding staircase led to the rooms above, and there were broad, plain, scoured, plank floors.

The surroundings were in keeping. The house itself stood facing west, close to the road, with a little dooryard filled with lilac bushes, and a large cherry tree. A few blue flagstones led from the gate to the porch. There was a wood, and an apple orchard just north — across what is now Poe Park. The hill sloped away to the south, almost from the verge of the porch, dipping down into Mill Creek Valley. To the south, down a slope of lawn, there were wide, sweeping views over the farms of the Bronx. The most living, contemporary description has been given by Mrs. Gove Nichols:

> On this occasion (probably a visit in the Summer of 1846) I was introduced to the young wife of the poet, and to the mother, then more than sixty years of age. She was a tall, dignified old lady, with a most

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[778] Prof. Woodberry.

lady-like manner, and her black dress, though old and much worn, looked really elegant on her. She wore a widow's cap, of the genuine pattern, and it suited her exquisitely with her snow-white hair. Her features were large, and corresponded with her stature, and it seemed strange how such a stalwart and queenly woman could be the mother of her *petite* daughter. Mrs. Poe looked very young; she had large black eyes, and a pearly whiteness of complexion which was a perfect pallor. Her pale face, her brilliant eyes, and her raven hair gave her an unearthly look. One felt that she was almost a disrobed spirit, and when she coughed, it was made certain that she was rapidly passing away.

The mother seemed hale and strong, and appeared to be a sort of universal Providence to her strange children.

The cottage had an air of gentility that must have been lent to it by the presence of its inmates. So neat, so poor, so unfurnished, and yet so charming a dwelling I never saw. The floor of the kitchen was white as wheaten flour. A table, a chair, and a little stove it contained seemed to furnish it completely. The sitting room was laid with check matting; four chairs, a light stand, and a hanging bookshelf completed its furniture. There were pretty presentation copies of books on the little shelves, and the Brownings had posts of honor on the stand. With quiet exultation Poe drew from his inside pocket a letter he had recently received from Elizabeth Barrett Browning. He read it to us. It was very flattering. . . . On the bookshelf there lay a volume of Poe's poems. He took it down, wrote my name in it and gave it to me. I think he did this from a feeling of sympathy, for I could not be of advantage to him, as my two companions could. . . . He was at this time greatly depressed. Their extreme poverty, the sickness of his wife, and his own inability to write sufficiently accounted for this. We spent half an hour in the house, when some more company came, which included ladies, and then we all went to walk.

We strolled away into the woods, and had a very cheerful time, till someone proposed a game at leaping. I think it must have been Poe, as he was expert in the exercise. Two or three gentlemen agreed to leap with him, and though one of them was tall and had been a hunter in times past, Poe still distanced them all. But alas! his gaiters, long worn and carefully kept, were both burst in the grand leap that made him victor. . . . I was certain he had no other shoes, boots, or gaiters. Who amongst us could offer him money to buy a new pair? . . . When we reached the cottage, I think all felt that we must not go in, to see the shoeless unfortunate sitting or standing in our midst. I had an errand, however — and I entered the house to get it. The poor old mother looked at his feet with a dismay that I shall never forget. 'Oh, Eddie!' said she, 'how did you burst your gaiters?' Poe seemed to have come into a semi-torpid state as soon as he saw his mother. ‘Do answer Muddie’, now said she coaxingly — I related the cause of the mishap, and she drew me into the kitchen.

‘Will you speak to Mr. ——,’ she said, ‘about Eddie’s last poem?’ Mr. —— was the reviewer. ‘If he will only take the poem, Eddie can have a pair of shoes. He has it — I carried it last week, and Eddie says it is his best. You will speak to him about it, won’t you?’

We had already read the poem in conclave, and Heaven forgive us, we could not make head or tail of it.[783] It might as well have been in any of the lost languages, for any meaning we could extract from its melodious numbers. I remember saying that I believed it was only a hoax that Poe was passing off for poetry, to see how far his name would go in imposing upon people. But here was a situation. The reviewer had been actively instrumental in the demolition of the gaiters.

‘Of course, they will publish the poem,’ said I, ‘and I will ask C—— to be quick about it.’

The poem was paid for at once, and published soon after. I presume it is regarded as genuine poetry in the collected poems of its author, but then it bought the poet a pair of gaiters, and twelve shillings over.

At my next visit Poe grew very confidential with me.

‘I write,’ said he, ‘from a mental necessity — to satisfy my taste and my love of art. Fame forms no motive power with me. What can I care for the judgment of a multitude, every individual of which I despise?’

‘But, Mr. Poe,’ said I, ‘there are individuals whose judgment you respect.’

‘Certainly,’ and I would choose to have their esteem unmixed with the mean adulation of the mob.’

‘But the multitude may be honestly and legitimately pleased,’ said I.

‘That may be *possible*,’ said Poe, musingly, ‘because they may have an honest leader, and not a poor man who has been paid a hundred dollars to manufacture opinions of them and fame for an author.’

‘Do reviewers sell their literary conscience thus unconscionably?’ said I.

‘A literary critic must be loath to violate his taste, his sense of the fit and the beautiful. To sin against these, and praise an unworthy author, is to him an unpardonable sin. But if he were placed on the rock, or if one he loved better than his own life were writhing there, I can conceive of his forging a note against the Bank of Fame, in favour of some would-be poetess, who is able and willing to buy his poems and opinions.’

He turned almost fiercely upon me, his fine eyes piercing me, ‘ Would you blame a man for not allowing his sick wife to starve? ’ said he.

I changed the subject. . . .

At my next visit, Poe said, as we walked along the brow of the hill, ‘ I can’t look out on this loveliness till I have made a confession to you. I said to you when you were here last, that I despised fame.’

‘ I remember,’ said I.

‘ It is false,’ said he. ‘ I love fame — I dote on it — I idolize it — I would drink to the very dregs the glorious intoxication. I would have incense ascend in my honour from every hill and hamlet, from every town and city on this earth. Fame! Glory! — they are life-giving breath, and living blood. No man lives, unless he is famous! How bitterly I belied my nature, and my aspirations, when I said I did not desire fame, and that I despised it.’

One must remember that fame was the only reward that he could expect, in compensation for a life that had been spent in toil and devoid of any apparent reward. Yet this outburst shows to what an exalted point the ego had attained. It was only a year before *Eureka* was written, when the climax of self-exaltation was achieved.

This outburst from the hidden depths of the man’s nature, reveals a more than rational ambition. Fame had become the craving, the morbid thirst of a soul condemned to solitary confinement. To be universally upon all lips, even after death, would somehow, he felt, identify him with men and bring them closer. Life had been a dream. His children were only dreams. To make them live, was to survive, in part, himself. “ No man lives unless he is famous! ” — glory would be his only immortality. One wonders — Mrs. Gove’s recollections were published in the *Sixpenny Magazine!* [777]

The presence of so marked a character as Mr. Poe did not pass unnoticed in the annals of so quiet a neighborhood. The visitors from town, the sufferings of his wife, and the various shifts to which he was put by his obvious poverty were, no doubt, the commonplace of much rural gossip. Mrs. Clemm was forced occasionally to borrow a shilling from some of the neighbors to get Eddie’s mail when he was unable to walk to the West Farms Post

Office, and the priests and students at St. Johns College remembered meeting Poe, from time to time, walking along the lanes, often at nightfall, muttering, lost in his dreams, a lonely and mysterious figure.

He occasionally walked out the Kingsbridge road to visit the Macombs, or down to the village of Tremont, where he had struck up an acquaintance with the resident physician at a home for incurables. The Valentines were also good and kind neighbors; their name recalled boyhood memories to Poe, a fact which would have been of considerable import to him, for he was almost superstitious about such associations. It was probably the deciding reason for his having rented the cottage from them! Virginia and Mrs. Clemm were especially good friends with the neighbors on the Van Cott farm nearby, and, from a Miss Susan Cromwell, another neighbor, comes a particularly tragic anecdote.[778]

Miss Cromwell lived a little beyond the Poes. In the Spring of 1846, as she was passing by the cottage up the Kingsbridge Road, she noticed Poe up in the cherry tree gathering the red, ripe fruit, and tossing it to Virginia, who caught it in her lap, laughing and calling back, as she sat dressed in white on a green sod bank beneath. Poe was standing on a branch above her, about to toss another bunch of cherries into the bright red pile already gathered in Virginia's apron, when white and crimson suddenly became one in the tide which leaped from her lips. Poe sprang from the branches, clasped Virginia in his arms, and vanished with her fainting in his arms, through the door of the little cottage. " They were," said the literal Miss Cromwell, " *awful* poor."

Through all the years, Poe had retained his West Point cloak or overcoat, for during the Fordham episode, we hear of it several times. It was stolen from him once, after he had left it in a tavern near the Harlem Railroad Station, but seems to have been recovered through a warrant issued by his friend Justice Lorillard. So marked a garment, in so small a neighborhood, was not hard to trace down. It was this same cape or coat which played such a tragic rôle in the Winter that followed.

From a family by the name of Bushby nearby, comes the information that, while at Fordham, Poe was sponsor at the baptism of a child named for him. Significantly enough, he did not desire the boy to bear his middle name, and the namesake was baptized "Edgar Albert."[779] It was also noted that the Rector of the Episcopal Church at West Farms paid some visits to the cottage, and that Poe became friends with one of the priests in the seminary nearby.

Far from being a restful, and a quiet retirement, Fordham, in 1846, was to Poe a place of confusion. There was, of course, Virginia. He was torn between his pride, and the trammelings of poverty. His health and unstrung nervous condition precluded any work, except intermittently, perhaps upon a few poems. The ideas of *Eureka* must, in spite of everything, have already been taking shape. These dreams had been disturbed by his domestic tragedy, the henpecks of the *literati,* and the annoying affair with English. Rosalie had returned to Richmond in July.

During all this time, the usual active correspondence of a prominent literary man had been underway.[780] It was, under the circumstances of his health, a considerable tax at that time upon him. The most intimate, and sympathetic letter of 1846, belongs to the correspondence with Thomas Holley Chivers. In July, Poe received a whole bundle of his letters, which the landlady at his former lodging, 195 Broadway, had neglected to forward. He hastened to reply. The intercourse of the two was most illuminating and intimate. Chivers afterward prepared a life of Poe.[781] At the beginning of the year, and continued throughout, there was an interchange of letters between Duyckinck and Poe. The former was now acting as Poe's literary agent, having published his poems and tales. Poe was anxious to get out another collection of his tales giving a fuller selection, and in January, 1846, he had sent the proposed collection to Duyckinck, proposing that Mr. Wiley advance him $50 for the copyright. About the same time he wrote to Griswold asking him to further the plan. He was dissatisfied with the narrow range of his stories in the published edition.

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[779] Poe is known to have signed his name Edgar *Allan* Poe, only twice. (News of a letter said to belong to the early Baltimore period (*sic*) so signed, has recently been rumored to be in a collector's hands in Berlin.) Griswold was responsible for using the full name habitually. Poe evidently desired to suppress it. Poe, in his works, frequently refers in a disguised way to his middle name, and the reason for it. See *Three Sundays in a Week, The Literary Life of Thingum Bob Esq.,* etc., notes 191 to 197.

[780] Griswold, Miss Barrett, Eveleth, Duyckinck, Godey, Miss Lynch, Cooke, Ramsay, Willis, and a half dozen or so others engaged Poe's time in letters and replies in 1846.

[781] For an account of this *Life of Poe* by Chivers see Prof. Woodberry's article in the *Century Magazine* for February, 1903, reference note 775 above.

> Wiley, and Putnam's reader has what he thinks a taste for ratiocination . . . and has accordingly made up the book mostly of analytic stories. . . .

Neither Dr. Griswold nor Mr. Duyckinck agreed, and nothing further came of the matter. In April, Poe received the letter from Elizabeth Barrett which so pleased him. With Duyckinck there was also, in April, further correspondence about the anthology upon which Poe seems to have worked spasmodically at Fordham, and in June a short note concerning the reply to English, and a review of Poe's *Tales* to be written up at the suggestion of Martin Farquhar in the *Literary Gazette*.

In April, Poe had been chosen by a concurrent vote of the literary societies of the University of Vermont, as the poet for an anniversary celebration in August. He was unable, on account of ill-health and poverty, to go, but he wrote to Duyckinck asking to have the invitation given publicity. He also offered to sell that part of his correspondence containing the autographs of " statesmen," to Wiley & Putnam. Much of the correspondence of the Summer deals with the miserable English controversy. There were letters to Willis, Godey, Duyckinck and William Gilmore Simms. Simms' reply — he was then in New York — on July 30, 1846, is one of the best advised that Poe received. Poe had asked Simms to aid him in the English controversy.

> I note with regret the very desponding character of your last letter. I surely need not tell you how deeply and sincerely I deplore the misfortunes which attend you, — the more so as I see no prospect for your relief and extrication but such as must result from your own decision and resolve. No friend can help you in the struggle which is before you. Money, no doubt, can be procured; but this is not altogether what you require. Sympathy may soothe the hurts of Self Esteem, and make a man temporarily forgetful of his assailants; — but in what degree will

this avail, and for how long, in the protracted warfare of twenty or thirty years?

You are still a very young man, and one too largely and too variously endowed, not to entertain the conviction — as your friends entertain it — of a long and manful struggle with, and a final victory over, fortune. But this warfare, the world requires you to carry on with your own unassisted powers. It is only in your manly resolution to use these powers, after a legitimate fashion, that it will countenance your claims to its regards and sympathy; and I need not tell you how rigid and exacting it has been in the case of the poetical genius, or, indeed, the genius of any order.

Suffer me to tell you frankly, taking the privilege of a true friend, that you are now perhaps in the most perilous period of your career — just in that position — just at that time of life — when a false step becomes a capital error — when a single leading mistake is fatal in its consequences. You are no longer a boy. 'At thirty wise or never!' You must subdue your impulses; etc., in particular let me exhort you to discard all associations with men, whatever their talents, whom you cannot esteem as men.

Pardon me for presuming thus to counsel one whose great natural and acquired resources should make him rather the teacher of others. But I obey a law of my own nature, and it is because of my sympathies that I speak. Do not suppose yourself abandoned by the worthy and honorable among your friends. They will be glad to give you welcome if you will suffer them. They will rejoice — I know their feelings and hear their language — to countenance your return to that community — that moral province in society — of which, let me say to you, respectfully and regretfully, — you have been, according to all reports but too heedlessly, and, perhaps, too scornfully indifferent.

Remain in obscurity for awhile. You have a young wife — I am told a suffering & an interesting one, — let me entreat you to cherish her, and to cast away those pleasures which are not worthy of your mind, and to trample those temptations under foot, which degrade your person, and make it familiar to the mouth of vulgar jest.

You may do all this, by a little circumspection. It is still within your power. Your resources from literature are probably much greater than mine. I am sure they are just as great. You can increase them, so that they shall be ample for all your legitimate desires; but you must learn the worldling's lesson of prudence; — a lesson, let me add, which the literary world has but too frequently & unwisely disparaged. It may seem to you very impertinent, — in most cases it is impertinent — that he who gives nothing else should presume to give counsel. But one gives that which he can most spare, and you must not esteem me indifferent to a condition which I can in no other way assist.

I have never been regardless of your genius, even when I knew nothing of your person. It is some years since I counselled Mr. Godey to obtain the contributions of your pen. He will tell you this. I hear that you reproach him. But how can you expect a magazine proprietor to encourage contributions which embroil him with all his neighbors? These broils do you no good — vex your temper, destroy your peace of mind, and hurt your reputation. You have abundant resources upon which to draw even were there no Grub Street in Gotham. Change your tactics and begin a new series of papers with your publisher.

The printed matter which I send you, might be quoted by Godey, and might be ascribed to me. But, surely, I need not say to you that, to a Southern man, the annoyance of being mixed up in a squabble with persons whom he does not know, and does not care to know — and from whom no Alexandrine process of cutting loose, would be permitted by society, would be an intolerable grievance. I submit to frequent injuries and misrepresentations, content though annoyed by the slaves (*sic*), that the viper should amuse himself upon the file at, at the expense of his own teeth.

As a man, as a writer, I shall always be solicitous of your reputation & success. You have but to resolve on taking and asserting your position, equally in the social and the literary world, and your way is clear, your path is easy, and you will find true friends enough to sympathize in your triumphs.

Very sincerely though sorrowfully, Yr. obdt, Servt.

W. GILMORE SIMMS[782]

— all of which was most excellent advice. Amid the *pot pourri* of Poe's correspondence, against the emotional confusion of his nature, and his growing egotism, such letters availed little. What he more desired was admiration and sympathy. This was liberally supplied to him in the letters from Philip Pendleton Cooke, another poet, whose nature, judging from the passages in the works of Poe which he most admired, was in peculiar sympathy with Poe's. Miss Lynch continued her kindly interest in the family at Fordham, and, despite Poe's despairing letters to her, wrote, cheering him, and was of great charitable assistance. Poe was hardly in town at all at this period. One of the few references to his appearances in New York is contained in an undated letter from Miss Lynch (Mrs. Botta) in which his reciting a poem, perhaps *Ulalume*, at a Tuesday evening party is mentioned.[783]

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[782] Postscript omitted — Simms was in New York, and too busy with a book on the press to visit Poe at Fordham, for which he apologizes. Letter frequently reprinted. The paragraphing has been supplied here. Letter in *Griswold Collection*, reprinted by Prof. Harrison and Prof. Woodberry.

Poe did little literary work at Fordham in 1846. In a letter to Chivers, in July, he notices the fact, and, on December 15, he writes:

> For more than six months I have been ill — for the greater part of that time, dangerously so, and quite unable to write even an ordinary letter. My magazine papers appearing in this interval were all in the publishers hands before I was taken sick. Since getting better, I have been, as a matter, of course, overwhelmed with the business accumulating during my illness.[776]

Part of this business was loose ends, left over from the *Broadway Journal*. Some of the correspondence of the period was with G. W. Eveleth, a Maine man, who read Poe's work with admiration, took a keen interest in him personally, and has left some excellent contemporary criticisms of Poe.[784] June had brought a letter from Nathaniel Hawthorne, then at Salem, about *Mosses from an Old Manse* written on the seventeenth. He says:

> . . . I have read your occasional notices of my productions with great interest — not so much because your judgment was, upon the whole favourable, as because it seemed to be given in earnest. I care for nothing but the truth. I confess, however, that I admire you (more) as a writer of tales than as a critic upon them, I might often — and often do — dissent from your opinions in the latter capacity, but would never fail to recognize your force and originality in the former.[785]

During the Summer and Autumn, by hook or crook, the inmates of the cottage at Fordham had managed to exist. As the Winter closed down upon them exceptionally cold (as the Summer had been unusually hot), poverty dire and inescapable, hunger and lack of clothing were now made doubly intolerable by extreme cold. There was a little stove in the kitchen, and an open fireplace in the parlor. The only cheerful recollections of the entire Winter came from the Catholic priest, who dropped in sometimes of evenings to spend a few hours before the fire with Poe, and engaged him in metaphysical conversation. As the Winter advanced, fuel was scarce. It became impossible to heat the little garret upstairs, and Virginia was moved down into the tiny bedroom next to the parlor. She was now unable to leave bed often, the end was so near. The Bathhursts, some kindly neighbors, sent food and fuel. In the snow-drifts the visits of the *literati* had ceased, and Poe and Mrs. Clemm were left alone to listen to the wolf howling at the door, and the whines of the winter wind that swirled the snow down the Kingsbridge Road. Mrs. Clemm alone ventured out, to "borrow" a few eggs or potatoes.

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[783] This seems to be the same recitation referred to by Mrs. Gove Nichols. See page 714.

[784] For the Poe-Eveleth correspondence see the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, edited by Dr. Thomas Ollive Mabbott. Also Prof. James Southall Wilson's *Poe-Eveleth Pamphlet*.

[785] See, for a full discussion, *Poe's Criticism of Hawthorne*. Copy in the New York Public Library. This is not a book by Poe.

Virginia lay on a straw mattress, wrapped in Poe's cloak, for there were no blankets, hugging the cat to keep warm. In the little bedroom Poe could see her faint breath, as he bent over her holding her hands or feet to keep them from aching with cold. There must have been days, when even the spring was frozen solid, and fuel was low; dark, winter afternoons and long, terrifying nights as Virginia fluttered down into the abyss, when it seemed as if all three must inevitably perish. Through it all persisted Mrs. Clemm's unceasing nursing of her two children, and the pride of "Israfel" and "Lucifer." Only the neighbors knew, pitied, and mercifully helped.

By what seems to have been a special dispensation, Mrs. Gove Nichols was impelled to make a visit to Fordham, apparently early in December, 1846. Poe and Mrs. Clemm were battling to keep Virginia alive.

> I saw her in her bed-chamber. Everything here was so neat, so purely clean, so scant and poverty stricken, that I saw the poor sufferer with such a heartache as the poor feel for the poor.
>
> There was no clothing on the bed, which was only straw, but a snow-white counterpane and sheets. The weather was cold, and the sick lady had the dreadful chills that accompany the hectic fever of consumption. She lay in the straw bed, wrapped in her husband's great coat, with a large tortoiseshell cat in her bosom. The wonderful cat seemed conscious of her great usefulness. The coat and the cat were the suf-

> ferer's only means of warmth, except as her husband held her hands, and her mother her feet. Mrs. Clemm was passionately fond of her daughter, and her distress on account of her illness and poverty was dreadful to see.
>
> As soon as I was made aware of these painful facts, I came to New York and enlisted the sympathies and services of a lady, whose heart and hand were ever open to the poor and miserable. . . .[777]

Mrs. Shew, for it was to her that Mrs. Gove Nichols had appealed, sent "a feather bed and an abundance of bed-clothing and other comforts." She also headed a subscription among friends, and brought Mrs. Clemm $60 the next week, after which her visits and ministrations were untiring. The whole affair started a great deal of talk among the *literati* and in journalistic circles, now to a more humane and admirable tune. Indeed, in this matter, all the natural kindliness of the good but foolish women who had surrounded Poe, and of the editors, and his social friends, comes out with a clear and merciful light. All the bigotries of literary cliques were temporarily forgotten, and natural human kindness came to the fore.

Mrs. Osgood received a letter from Mrs. Hewitt, written December 20, which informed her of Poe's bitter plight.

> The Poes are in the same state of physical and pecuniary suffering — indeed worse than they were last summer for now the cold weather is added to their accumulation of ills. I went to inquire of Mr. Post about them. He confirmed all that I had previously heard of their condition. Although he says Mrs. Clemm has never told him they were in want, yet she borrows a shilling often, *to get a letter from the office* . . . etc.

Mrs. Osgood was touched, and undoubtedly helped materially. She also spread the news, and wrote to her sister-in-law, Mrs. Locke, at Lowell, Massachusetts. Mrs. Locke sent Poe some verses and more substantial help. Mrs. Hewitt had undertaken to get up a subscription for the Poes among editors, so the matter got into print. "I fear it will hurt Poe's pride to have his affairs made so public." Soon afterward, greatly to Poe's own chagrin, this paragraph appeared in the *New York Express:*

> We regret to learn that Edgar A. Poe and his wife are both dangerously ill with the consumption, and that the hand of misfortune lies heavy upon their temporal affairs. We are sorry to mention the fact that they are so far reduced as to be barely able to obtain the necessaries of life. This is indeed a hard lot, and we hope the friends and admirers of Mr. Poe will come promptly to his assistance in his bitterest hour of need.

N. P. Willis was much moved by this notice, and with his characteristic kindness, gentleness, and tact, published in the *Home Journal,* which he was then editing, an appeal and a touching eulogy of Poe. In this, under the guise of an appeal for his former editor, he advocated a house of refuge for authors. This was enclosed to Poe with a kindly note. Poe was shocked that his affairs had thus been noised abroad, and replied, thankfully, but guardedly, saying that he had many private friends to whom he could have appealed, but that he deprecated public charity. The upshot of the whole matter was, that largely through the efforts of Mary Louise Shew, the Poe household was saved, and Virginia enabled to die at home surrounded by a few primary comforts.

Behind it all is the ghost of this poor little sufferer, seeming to revive at times, for her natural temperament was childishly merry, when little gifts were brought her, and she was surrounded for a while by the voices and kindly faces of friends. She had been married as a child to the loneliest and most ambitious man in the world. She seems to have clung to him pathetically, knowing him as no one else could. All attempts to present her real character must be forever baffled. What she was to others, she remains to us, an immature, sweet, and trusting, but scarcely visible girl-wife and invalided woman, caught by fate in the net of a tragedy, the strength of whose meshes she could no more glimpse than a fish seized upon by the trawler in dayless submarine valleys. About her there was, it must ever be remembered, the strange dignity of suffering and unfulfillment that requires, and yet mocks at tears.

Even at this desperate pass, we catch a glimpse of Poe *at work* in the little " parlor " at Fordham, the day before Christmas:

New York, *Dec.* 24, '46.

WM. D. TICKNOR, *Esq.* (Ticknor of Ticknor & Fields, Pub.).

DEAR SIR,

I am engaged on a book which I will probably call *Literary America,* and in which I propose to make a general survey of our Letters. I wish, of course, to speak of Oliver Wendell Holmes, and as I can say nothing of him to which, you as his publisher, could object, I venture to ask you for a copy of his *Poems,* and any memoranda, literary or personal, which may serve my purpose, and which you may have it in your power to supply. If you could procure me his autograph, also, I would be greatly obliged to you.

You will of course understand that I should not feel justified in asking these favors, unless I thought, as all men do, *very* highly of Holmes.

Please send anything for me, to the care of Freeman Hunt, Esq., Merchants' Magazine Office, N. York.

Very truly and respectfully yours —

EDGAR A. POE [786]

Christmas Day, 1846, was passed with Virginia hovering upon the verge. During the last days of the year, Poe seems to have been working on the pages of his anthology while Mrs. Clemm, between intervals of nursing Virginia and receiving Mrs. Shew and others, went to get the mail, and scanned the papers eagerly for any mention of Eddie. The many reports about the family, and the echoes of the English controversy had no doubt sharpened her eyes. The last hours of Virginia had been made more miserable by anonymous letters which were sent her, enclosing various reports circulated about the family's misery, and English's attack. Among the worst of these persecutors was the inveterate and ingenious Mrs. Ellet. Poe said that Virginia's end was hastened by Mrs. Ellet's pen.

Israfel was now somewhat cheered to learn from Mrs. Clemm's gleanings from the public prints that his work was being republished, and attracting attention in England, Scotland and France. The sight of Poe writing and corresponding, while Mrs.

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[786] Letter in the *Justice Holmes Collection* in the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. Courtesy of the Librarian of Congress, and the Honorable Justice Holmes.

Clemm used her shears on the newspapers before the fire in the living-room, with Virginia dying in the little room scarcely twenty feet away, is a curious but yet natural one. The wife's illness had became the familiar condition of the household for many years. Catarina walked about the cottage, her tail in the air, sometimes perching upon Poe's shoulder, or lying upon Virginia's bed. Mrs. Shew or Mrs. Gove Nichols dropped in, bringing dainties and comforts from the town.

On December 30, Poe wrote his guarded and carefully calculated reply to Willis, and another letter to Duyckinck enclosing the news of his French republication, and the letter from Stonehaven, Scotland. The clock ticked on, and 1846 glided into 1847.

New Year's brought the shadow to the door. By the close of January it had reached to Virginia's bedside, and the end was at hand. On the twenty-ninth of January, 1847, the relatives and friends had begun to gather at Fordham. Among those who arrived on that day was Poe's "Mary," his old Baltimore sweetheart, to whom Virginia had carried notes as a little girl. To her surprise she found Virginia sitting up.

> The day before Virginia died I found her in the parlor. I said to her, 'Do you feel any better to day?' and sat down by the big armchair in which she was placed. Mr. Poe sat on the other side of her. I had my hand in hers, and she took it and placed it in Mr. Poe's, saying, 'Mary, be a friend to Eddie, and don't forsake him; he always loved you — didn't you, Eddie?' We three were alone, Mrs. Clemm being in the kitchen.[422]

One can see the poor, little, wasted body with the still plump face sitting propped up in the chair, gazing into the fire, with Poe and Mary on either side, thinking not of herself, but of what the future was to bring to her husband. She felt he needed friends. Mary went back that afternoon to New York, and Mrs. Smith (Miss Herring), the Poes' and Clemms' Baltimore cousin, arrived.[593 and 614] Towards evening, Virginia evidently began to sink rapidly, for Poe wrote to Mrs. Shew a letter that must have been delivered by a friend.

> KINDEST — DEAREST FRIEND, — My poor Virginia still lives, although failing fast and now suffering much pain. May God grant her

life until she sees you and thanks you once again! Her bosom is full to overflowing — like my own — with a boundless — inexpressible gratitude to you. Lest she may never see you more — she bids me say that she sends you her sweetest kiss of love and will die blessing you. But come — oh, come to-morrow! Yes, I *will* be calm — everything you so nobly wish to see me. My mother sends you, also, her 'warmest love and thanks.' She begs me to ask you, if possible, to make arrangements at home so that you may stay with us To-morrow night. I enclose the order to the Postmaster. Heaven bless you and farewell!

EDGAR A. POE

Fordham, *January* 28, '47.

Mrs. Shew came out the next morning. On the way to Fordham on the stage, she met "Poe's Mary" also bound for the cottage, and as they drove along through the bitter cold, they talked about Virginia.

Virginia was now lying again in her little cubby hole of a bedroom on the ground floor. During the afternoon, she was still rational, and there was a final gleam. Mrs. Shew and Mrs. Smith were sitting by her bedside when Virginia took from beneath her pillow a picture of Poe, and the jewel case which had belonged to Mrs. Poe, the poet's mother, and gave them to Mrs. Shew. She also asked for two letters from Mrs. Allan which she had read to Mrs. Shew.[40] These, it appears, had been written to him after his running away from Richmond in 1827, were couched in affectionate terms, and begged him to return. They exonerated Poe from blame for the troubles in the Allan household. The letters, then or later, fell into the hands of Poe's cousin, Mrs. Smith. Eliza White also remembered having seen these letters. Could they be found, they might constitute an important piece of evidence in the story of Poe.[787]

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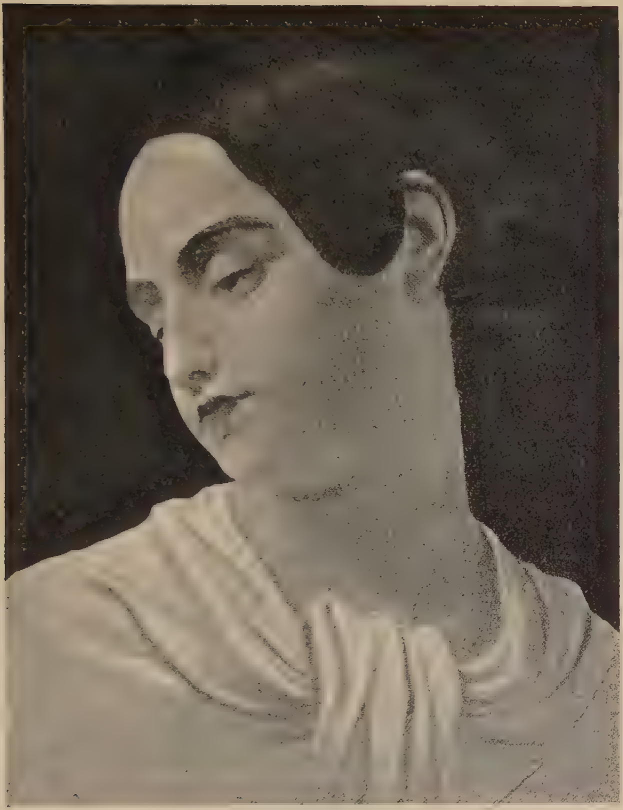
[787] This incident constitutes an important link in the Poe-Allan mystery. Through Mrs. Shew is also traced the miniature of Mrs. David Poe (see note 40), also Mrs. Poe's jewel box, given to Rosalie in 1811. Rosalie may have brought this with her to Fordham on the visit in 1846. It shows, at least, that Mrs. Poe's mementoes and, by inference, her *letters* (see note 41) were also *still* preserved. For a discussion of Mrs. Allan's letters see *Complete Poems*, by J. H. Whitty, *Memoir*, large edition, pages xxx and xxxi, Mrs. Shew says in her diary that the letters she heard read were from the *second* Mrs. Allan. This is an obvious mistake. It is impossible that the *second* Mrs. Allan should have written to Poe. It is *known* that she did not. All authorities agree on this. The letters were from the *first* Mrs. Allan, Poe's foster-mother.

Mrs. Shew said that Poe had denied himself many necessaries, and had suffered both cold and hunger to provide food and medicines for Virginia. At the time of her death, he was very ill. Virginia's passing must have had, for him, all the imaginative attributes of the mystic horror with which he regarded death, and her tiny bedroom have become the chamber where "Ligeia" strove fearfully to enter the corpse of "Rowena." Nothing was spared him. After nightfall apparently, Virginia smothered to death.

About all the tragedies that dogged the career of Israfel there was a complete, an ironically artistic, and certainly a Poesqueness that made them inimitable. After the death of Virginia, it was remembered that there was no picture of her which the family possessed. Accordingly, while she still lay dead, propped up in her bed, a water color sketch of her was hastily made by one of the ladies present, showing her after she had succumbed, with her eyes closed. The sketch was apparently afterward retouched in its reproductions, and the eyes of the dead woman opened. It is this picture of Virginia with which the public has become familiar, through infinite reduplication. About it, is all the air of tragedy and mortality, a certain creepiness which is associated with the popular legend of Poe.

Mrs. Shew provided a beautiful linen dress in which to bury Virginia, and she and Mrs. Clemm were assisted in their last ministrations by Mary, the adopted daughter of John Valentine, the owner of the little cottage.

On the day of the funeral, Virginia's coffin lay on the writing table before the windows in the little parlor. Some of the neighbors, the Valentines, and others came in. N. P. Willis, solicitous, and kindly to the last, came out from the city with G. P. Morris, his partner. It was very cold. Mary remained at the house. Poe, wrapping himself in the cloak which had but lately been used to keep Virginia warm, followed her to the grave. Mrs. Shew had hidden it but he had nothing adequate to wear, and the day was cold and grey. Virginia was borne down an alley of funereal trees, and left in the burial vault of the Valentine family in the graveyard of the Fordham Dutch Reformed Church, in the presence

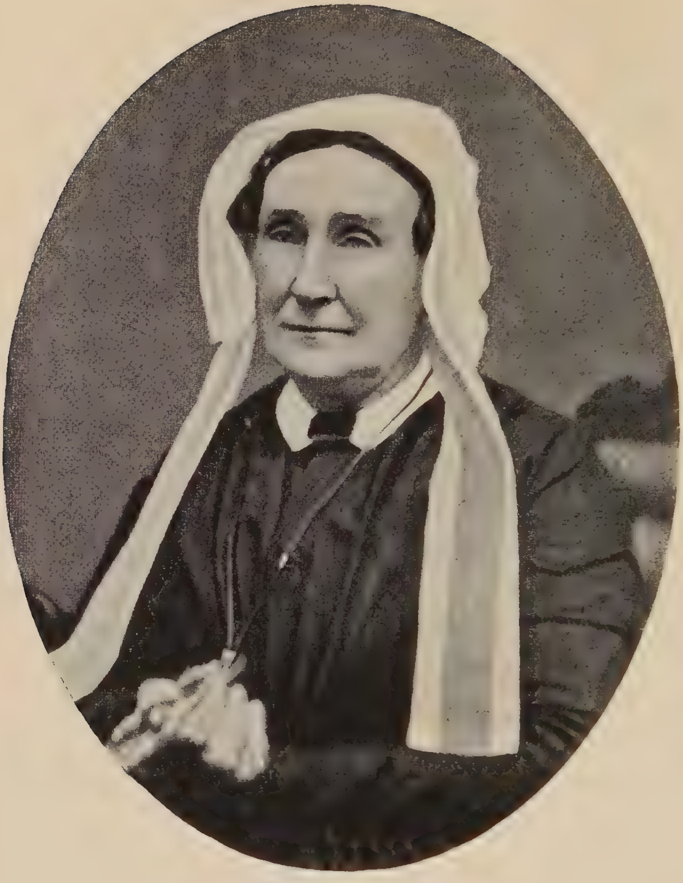


Virginia Poe

Wife of Edgar Allan Poe

From a photograph (?) *of a water color drawing made after Virginia's death at Fordham in 1847, in the possession of Ingram*

Courtesy of the Bookman, *London, and of W. Van R. Whitall, Esq.*



Mrs. Maria Clemm

From a daguerreotype taken in 1849

"My mother — my own mother, who died early,
  Was but the mother of myself; but you
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
  And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life."

Poe's Sonnet, "To My Mother."

of her husband, Mrs. Clemm, Mrs. Shew, Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, and a few others.[788] Poe returned to the house where he was in a state of numbed collapse for some weeks afterward. Mrs. Clemm, in the desperation of poverty, tried to sell Virginia's gold thimble to Mary Devereaux before she left. Mary was too poor to buy it. Thus ended a long and haggard chapter of suffering. The tragedy of Israfel was about to enter upon its final phase.

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[788] In 1875, owing to the destruction of the cemetery in which Virginia had been buried, the contents of the graves and vaults at Fordham were removed, or scattered. Virginia's remains were rescued by Gill, Poe's biographer, put in a box under his bed, etc., — and, after exciting considerable gruesome and nauseous curiosity as the "bones of Annabel Lee," were finally taken to Baltimore and buried beside Poe, where they now rest. Thus fate was gruesomely consistent to the last.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Universe and Mrs. Shew

THE period from the death of Virginia, at the beginning of 1847, to the disappearance of Israfel himself in October, 1849, may be regarded, conveniently, as exhibiting three stages, *i.e.,* a brief attempt at recuperation, and the staging of a literary come-back in 1847, under the care of Mrs. Clemm and Mrs. Shew, — which ended in failure and despair; the effort to find a refuge from self in two notable affairs with " Annie " and Helen Whitman in 1848, — also ending in despair and an attempt at suicide; the last Richmond period, lit by a brief gleam of the sunshine of old memories and the engagement to Mrs. Shelton, — followed swiftly by the end, at Baltimore in 1849.[789]

For some time after the death of Virginia, Poe was too ill to leave Fordham at all. Had it not been for both Mrs. Clemm and Mrs. Shew, it is morally certain he could not have survived. Nothing had appeared from his pen since the last of the *Literati Papers* in the October *Godey's Lady's Book* of 1846, except *The Cask of Amontillado,* probably written months before.[790]

Mrs. Shew now once more exerted herself, and was able to raise a purse of $100, to which General Scott — whose mind must have traveled back to a harum-scarum lad in Richmond at a ghost party years before, and to John Allan's handsome protégé at West Point — contributed, with some evidences of emotion, it is said.[356] Through Mrs. Shew, Dr. Valentine Mott had also been interested in Poe, and he and Dr. Francis saw him from time to time. There is considerable reason to suspect that it was the advice and warnings of this trained medical woman, and the two doctors that restrained Poe, and enabled him to recover in so far as he did.

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[789] These divisions, of course, are purely convenient ones.

[790] Poe may have contributed about this time to the *Literary World,* contributions as yet untraced — see (Eveleth) correspondence, also Poe's reference to his file of this periodical to Mrs. Clemm from Richmond, September, 1849.

Even the first intense period of grief was broken in upon by the coming to trial of the libel suit in February.[791] The money received, and doubtless too, the sense of final vindication and triumph over his enemies, recalled Poe somewhat from his nightmare of sorrows.[791] At the same time, he was further annoyed by the charges of plagiarism made in Philadelphia over the book on conchology.[792]

Mrs. Clemm, poor old " Muddie," released from her long years of constant nursing of Virginia, now found herself with a new patient in Eddie. Nevertheless, she went out and bought some comfortable things. A new tea set, some carpets, and a lamp were the proceeds of the libel money. She and Eddie now had a few guests in to tea, and it was commented upon unfavorably that Mrs. Clemm took much pride in her new teapot, and that Eddie seemed fond of Mrs. Shew. To be sure Mrs. Shew *had* saved their lives — but then, " How could they forget poor, dead Virginia, so soon? "

In 1847 it was a great romantic advantage to be dead. Even the wailing harp of Israfel was not quite sufficient unto the woes with which it was so liberally furnished. Besides, in the notes from those strings, there had been detected a passionate, an almost lunar grief, that was not quite pretty. It was a little out of place in the drawing-rooms where the weeping willow, and the lilies, and violets were appreciated, — but not the tomb itself. Mr. C. C. Burr, however, was adequate to the occasion and insisted that this was what his friend Poe was doing.[793]

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[791] See Poe to G. W. Eveleth, New York, March 11, 1847. Prof. James Southall Wilson's pamphlet of Poe — *Eveleth Letters*, page 14. Also see Chapter XXII, pages 708 and 709.

[792] Published in the *Saturday Evening Post*. See Poe to Eveleth, New York, February 16, 1847, Prof. James Southall Wilson's *Poe-Eveleth Letters Pamphlet*, page 12. In this letter appears Poe's defence, quoted in this book from another source. See Chapter XIX, page 443. Also see note 532, also Chapter XXII, page 627, and note 698.

[793] Charles C. Burr was a friend of Poe in Philadelphia. See Chapter XXV, page 759.

Many times, after the death of his beloved wife, was he found at the dead hour of a winter-night, sitting beside her tomb almost frozen in the snow, where he had wandered from his bed weeping and wailing.

The age insisted upon it. Perhaps it *was* true. Mrs. Clemm tells us that Poe could not sleep; that the darkness and the lonely nights drove him frantic; and that she sat with him for hours with her hand on his forehead until, thinking him asleep, she would try to leave — only to hear him whisper, "Not yet, 'Muddie,' not yet."

There was a rocky ledge overhung by maples near the house that he particularly haunted. And there was a walk along the aqueduct path that, to the northward, at High Bridge, suddenly seemed to leave the earth behind, leading out on to a succession of granite arches, where, in the daytime, one could then look out over a great sweep of landscape, filled with blowing woods, white villages, and meadows that rolled away northward into the highlands and islands about Pelham Bay; or sank away eastward into the far, shimmering mirror of the Sound, streaked by the trailing plumes of steamboats, and flecked with sails. Down in the little graveyard below him, Virginia slept in the borrowed tomb under the cypresses and pine trees. Out of the sea behind Long Island rose the moon.

And now, as the night was senescent,
And the star-dials pointed to morn —
As the star-dials hinted of morn —
At the end of our path a liquescent
And nebulous lustre was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent
Arose with a duplicate horn —
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
Distinct with its duplicate horn. . . .

Since childhood Poe had loved the stars, since the days of the telescope at John Allan's house.[794] In the pages of innumerable magazines he had carefully read the astronomical notes, and followed the news of the progress of that science as it was reported, decade by decade, in their columns.[795] And all this had led him to Laplace, and Newton, Dr. Nichol, obscure works on physics and mathematics, Kepler, and Boscovitch.

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[794] See Chapter VII, page 130, also note 183.

As Poe paced the arches of the High Bridge through the spring and summer nights of the year A.D. 1847, the mysterious sleeping world seemed to be cut away from beneath his feet, while over his head marched flashing rank on rank "the armies of unalterable law." He pondered upon it all, upon himself, and upon the place of man in the scheme of things, and he essayed to solve the mystery, which his own exalted ego whispered that he could solve. He could not bear to think that even God should elude him. There were two comments upon all this at Fordham — *Ulalume* and *Eureka*.[796] The poet's comment was strangled, but withal splendidly strangled by the "Magnificent Logician."

In *Ulalume,* Poe, the poet, personified the constellations, reading into them an allegory of his soul's predicament. Once more, as in *William Wilson,* he saw his own double. It was Psyche, his soul, this time. Bound on the great adventure of life, he and Psyche wandered together in search of the beloved one, and came to the doors of a tomb.

There was a white, frosty starlight caught in these lines; a terror of the great caverns of space haunted by the beasts of the zodiac; an element of irresponsible cosmic will in the fatal hour marked by the star-dials; a titanic alley of cypress for a mystic adventure with his own soul in a demon landscape lit by the star-glimmering, miraculous crescent of the goddess of passion.

> Astarte's bediamonded crescent.
> Distinct with its duplicate horn.

A fancy from Henry Hirst's trite verses had been transmitted, by genius, into an imaginative figure, an allegory of enormous significance.[601] Virginia, the little invalid maid who had represented for Israfel the maiden-like and chaste love of Diana, had passed away. For her, his tears were hardly dry when he beheld rising into the skies of his life, triumphant over all the lion dens of misery, the crescent of Astarte, who represented physical passion:

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[795] The *North American:* See *Poe's Brother,* George H. Doran Co., 1926. Even as early as 1827 the *North American* carried astronomical news typical of the "scientific" notes that interested Poe.

[796] The pronunciation of U-lalume as "Oolalume" is contrary to Poe's obvious fondness for the sound, "U" long (ū), repeated often in such words as "Eulalie." The "U" in *Ulalume* is like the "U" in Uranus, Urania, etc.

And I said — ‘ She is warmer than Diana.’
  She rolls through an ether of sighs —
  She revels in a region of sighs:
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
  Those cheeks when the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion,
  To point us the path to the skies —
  To the Lethean peace of the skies —

And then a colloquy takes place between the poet and his own soul. A strange foreboding of love, of Astarte, has been discovered by his Psyche.

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said — ‘ Sadly this star I mistrust —
Her *pallor* I strangely mistrust: —
Oh, hasten! — oh, let us not linger!
Oh, fly! — let us fly! — for we *must!* ’
In *terror* she spoke, letting sink her
Wings until they trailed in the dust —

And then the alter ego “ I,” passifies the soul, and kisses her out of her gloom, and conquers her scruples,

And we passed to the *end* of a vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb.

All the world knows the rest. “ ’Tis the vault of thy *lost* Ulalume.” It was only last year, Poe cries, “ On *this* very night of last year . . . that I brought a dread burden down here.” Just below him, in the misty lowlands among the trees, was the vault of Virginia.

Well I know, now, this dark tarn of Amber,
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.[797]

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[797] In *The Domain of Arnheim* and *Landor’s Cottage* will be found descriptions of the same landscape under mist, and mystery that these two lines symbolize.

In the few months that followed, the poet was to tempt his Psyche down the same vista at least three separate times. At the end, he inevitably found the same locked door of the tomb, until it opened for him alone. It was a species of despair that can only be expressed by the dirge-like name which he found written on the door. What it was in his nature that thus ended every love quest, whether it was the long frustration of his marriage, or a fear, even more deep-seated and abysmal, is a question that, if solvable, would go far to explain within him the conviction of tragedy and emotional disaster that rested upon him heavily for almost twenty years.

Thus the poet in him adventured with his soul and the stars. The mind of the man, now convinced of its great logical powers,[798] and under the necessity of so believing in itself, reached out even further into the abysses, and setting no bounds to its activities, beheld God breathing and inbreathing — through an endless succession of eternal cycles — atoms, and universes of stars. *Eureka* was written at Fordham. Let us descend from the aqueduct a moment into the cottage with Mrs. Clemm.

> He never liked to be alone, and I used to sit up with him, often until four o'clock in the morning, he at his desk, writing, and I dozing in my chair. When he was composing *Eureka* we used to walk up and down the garden, his arm around me, mine around him, until I was so tired I could not walk. He would stop every few minutes and explain his ideas to me, and ask if I understood him. I always sat with him when he was writing, and gave him a cup of hot coffee every hour or two. At home he was simple and affectionate as a child, and during all the years he lived with me I do not remember a single night that he failed to come and kiss his 'mother,' as he called me, before going to bed.[799]

There is an enormous, an almost sardonic irony between the domestic scene, as described by Mrs. Clemm, and what was going on in the poet's mind. *Eureka* must have consumed a deal of coffee, and Mrs. Clemm would have been nearly walked to death.

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[798] See Poe's comparison, in a note in *Eureka,* of his logical process in the prose poem with the same in his detective stories.

[799] R. E. Shapley in a Philadelphia newspaper, quoted by Woodberry, 1909, vol. II, page 236.

It was nothing less than the Eternal Spirit, brooding on the abyss and making it pregnant, streams of atoms rioting along the illimitable inane which now obsessed the poet's mind. Indeed, there is a close resemblance between Poe when he was pondering *Eureka* and "Lucretius," maddened by the love philter, and the enormous visions he was no longer able to save from the confusion of insane dreams.[800] The parallel in many ways is a true one, even to the events which followed.

It was a strange thing, this prose poem, a compound of many tides of thought at the time. It was the sophistry which Poe was forced to introduce into its pages in order to try to fuse its imponderable but antagonistic elements, by which the work finally falls. What was meant to be a chemical solution of ideas is found in reality upon analyses to be only an emulsion, but let us grant the fact, cleverly even subtly mixed. The unity is purely mechanical and literary, but *Eureka,* despite the bitter criticisms which it has received, remains a creditable piece of dialectic. Philosophically it is an Alexandrine concoction, but with this exception — it is animated by the imagination of an abnormally detached and exalted mind.

One hears very little of, or from Poe during the Spring and Summer of 1847. The *Home Journal,* in March 13, carried his lines addressed to "M. L. S." — Marie Louise Shew, — which are an expression of passionate gratitude to her for his preservation. Into those lines had already crept an attitude that was something more than gratitude, and a little less than love. Mrs. Shew had now been added to the pantheon of Poesque Angels in lines —

> By him, who, as he pens them, thrills to think
> His spirit is communing with an angel's.

The next week Willis in the *Home Journal* inserted a notice announcing *The Authors of America, In Prose and Verse,* by Edgar A. Poe, as about to appear. This was evidently an advance puff for the projected anthology which never came out. Willis, from now on, printed and reprinted Poe's poems whenever he could in the *Home Journal,* and kept the legend of his genius alive by commendation and notices. He was, in short, a kindly disposed friend, inclined, and able to be a good press agent. Willis undoubtedly desired to encourage Poe out of the despondency that had fallen upon him. He liked Poe, understood the cause of his weaknesses, and admired his genius. The effect of this championing by Willis in the *Home Journal* had an important bearing upon the rapid growth of Poe's fame. It was a powerful help. Poe kept writing to Willis, from time to time, telling him of his plans, and Mrs. Clemm called upon him frequently. The large spirit of Nathaniel P. Willis understood, condoned, helped, and still admired.

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[800] See Tennyson's *Lucretius,* — and *De Rerum Natura,* by Lucretius, for the references. Harrison also mentions this parallel.

March, 1847, also saw the publication of *The Domain of Arnheim* in the *Columbian Magazine.* This was a revamped version of *The Landscape Garden,* evidently worked over to be resalable. The retouches, as usual, were great improvements, and shadowed forth vaguely some of the Hudson's vistas, or what is perhaps Harlem river scenery near Fordham. " Arnheim " is certainly the poet's name for his domain of retreat, but applies more strictly to " A mass of semi-Gothic semi-Saracenic architecture " that appears at the end of the story. This story, together with its earlier version of *The Landscape Garden,* alluded to before, is therefore a compound of early Richmond days and the Fordham period.[185] In it is the glorification of hermitage.

And a hermit, Poe remained during the entire year of 1847. What few excursions he made into the world seem to have ended in disaster. He was then in such a delicate and precarious state of health that the least indulgence produced a state of collapse. Only while he remained at Fordham was he safe in Mrs. Clemm's care. We catch only a few glimpses of him in this sequestered existence.

Eureka and *Ulalume,* we know, were under way during this period. In the Summer, most of Poe's time seems to have been taken with gardening, enjoying country walks, and, probably, some boating (we hear in *Arnheim* about canoes). Poe was passing the time with " Muddie," the caged birds, and with the still flourishing and fondly cherished Catarina. Mrs. Shew occasionally came out to call, and once there were some English writers and travelers, who were charmed by this pastoral presentation of the poet in his garden with his cat, his flowers, and his caged birds.[801]

As spring advanced, he and Mrs. Clemm laid out some flower beds in the front garden and planted them with flowers and vines given by the neighbors, until when in May the cherry tree again blossomed the little abode assumed quite an attractive appearance. Upon an old settle left by a former tenant, and which Mrs. Clemm's skilful hands had mended and scrubbed and stained into respectability and placed beneath the cherry tree as a garden-seat, Poe might now often be seen reclining; gazing up into the branches, where birds and bees flitted in and out, or talking and whistling to his own pets, a parrot and bobolink, whose cages hung in the branches. A passer-by was impressed by the picture presented quite early one summer morning of the poet and his mother standing together on the green turf, smiling, looking up and talking to these pets. Here on the convenient settle, on returning from one of his long sunrise rambles, he would rest until summoned by his mother to his frugal breakfast . . . 'a pretzel and two cups of strong coffee,' or when there was no pretzel, the crusty part of a loaf with a bit of salt herring as a relish. . . . He was fond of fruit, and his sister said of buttermilk and curds, which they obtained from their rural neighbors. . . . Most of his time, said Mrs. Clemm, was passed out of doors. He did not like the loneliness of the house, and would not remain alone in the room in which Virginia had died.[802]

About the beginning of August, 1847, Poe made a visit to Philadelphia, taking with him some articles to sell to *Graham's*. By August 10, 1847, he was back again at Fordham writing to someone connected with *Graham's Magazine* (probably Charles J. Peterson) from which it appears that —

> Without your aid, at the precise moment and in the precise manner in which you rendered it, it is more than probable that I should not now be alive to write you this letter. . . .[803]

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[801] The Englishmen speak of "rare tropical birds." There was a bobolink, a parrot, and canaries.

[802] *Home Life of Poe*, S. A. Weiss, pages 150, 151. Mrs. Weiss constructed her accounts from various authentic recollections in this case. See note 777.

[803] This letter at the University of Virginia is minus an address, but was probably written to Peterson, the assistant editor of *Graham's Magazine*. Poe to ———, August 10, 1847, quoted by Harrison, vol. I, pages 270, 271, *Biography*.

As to the meaning of which, there can be little doubt. Poe, in his already dreadfully disorganized condition, had taken a drink. He was, he said, " exceeding ill — so much so that I had *no hope* except in getting home immediately."[803] He received an advance of $10 from Mr. Graham, who was kindly in his reception. Poe already owed Mr. Graham about $50. Leaving two articles with the magazine, he now returned to Fordham. The first excursion, from the hermitage into the world of reality, had ended in swift, almost fatal disaster.

Poe's condition at this time, towards the end of 1847, is very difficult to justly apprehend. He seems to have been reduced to a quivering bundle of sensitive nerves by the privations preceding the great shock, for shock it was, of Virginia's death. From a medical diagnosis, upon which considerable faith may be put, only a few months later, it also appears that his heart was giving out, and that he was suffering from something akin to lesion of the brain. The trip to Philadelphia seems to show that the slightest indulgence in alcohol was to court death.

He was also troubled by a growing platonic affection for Mrs. Shew, upon whom, next to Mrs. Clemm, he now relied for help and sympathy. There can be very little doubt that, from time to time at Fordham, he resorted to drugs, Rosalie Poe specifically mentions morphine. He had now arrived at that state of ego, with the writing and completion of *Eureka,* in which, as he phrases it, " My whole nature revolts at the idea that there is any Being in the Universe superior to *myself*." He states that he felt this feeling to be only natural in all men.[804] In *Eureka* he had, by his metaphysical-cosmic theories, succeeded, he thought, in identifying all life as being a part of God, and, from that, he doubtless derived considerable comfort. By the end of 1847 he was now, once more, preparing to appear in the world, and to startle men by the announcement of his " discoveries." Through Willis, he arranged to deliver *Eureka* as a lecture.

In December, *Ulalume* appeared anonymously in the *American Whig* as *The Raven* had done. Following out precisely the same scheme of calling notice to it, Poe now wrote to Willis who reprinted it the following month in the *Home Journal* with an inspired query as to its author.[805] Some minor interest was evoked. With the beginning of the new year, another instalment of the *Marginalia* appeared in *Graham's,* and a biography of Poe, by P. P. Cooke, came out in Richmond in the *Messenger*. Cooke's article was entitled,

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[804] *Eureka.*

> Edgar A. Poe, an estimate of his literary merits. By P. P. Cooke, — the following paper is a sequel to Mr. Lowell's memorial (so-called) of Mr. Poe, published two or three years since in *Graham's Magazine.*[806]

The article concluded with what was, probably, an inspired paragraph by Poe, complaining about the small number, and the confined choice of Wiley & Putnam's edition of his *Tales*. " A reader gathering his knowledge of Mr. Poe from this Wiley & Putnam issue would perceive nothing of the diversity and variety for which his works are remarkable." A complete edition is thus hinted as being desirable.[806]

The lecture *On the Cosmogony of the Universe,* advertised to take place February 3, 1848, at the Society Library in New York, was to raise funds for the *Stylus,* now about to be resuscitated again to signs of life. In January, Poe had sent out the old prospectus again, with the added promise of articles on *Literary America* — a " faithful account of the literary productions, literary people, and literary affairs of the United States " — by the editor, of course. The Classical Department was announced as being in the hands of " the most distinguished of American scholars." This was Professor Charles Anthon, Poe's acquaintance of years past.[791]

Poe's friend, Freeman Hunt of the *Merchant's Magazine,* to whom Poe's mail was sent, had raised money for his own publication by making a personal canvass through the country for subscribers. Poe now decided to follow his friend's scheme. In January he had written to G. W. Eveleth that his plan was to go through the South and West, and there try to get enough subscribers to be able to commence with a list of at least five hundred.[807] The lecture on the universe was to provide the necessary traveling funds. N. P. Willis did his best through the columns of the *Home Journal* to advertise the lecture, and to smooth the way for the *Stylus*.

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[805] Poe to Willis, Fordham, December 8 (1847).

[806] J. H. Whitty, *Poems,* large edition, *Memoir,* page lix, gives the best account of this. Also consult Poe to Cooke, New York, August 9, 1846. The notice had been arranged for the year before it appeared. Cooke's admiration for Poe continued.

But even the weather was opposed to the *Stylus*. The night of the lecture was cold and stormy, and the hall none too well heated. Some sixty odd persons assembled, and listened to a rapturous address of lyrical logic for about two hours and a half. Poe must have read to them nearly the whole text of *Eureka,* or most copious extracts. Despite the disadvantages of the occasion, and the difficulties of the theme, the personality and eloquence of the lecturer made a memorable impression upon many of the auditors.

Poe's natural abilities as an orator and actor came out strongly upon such occasions as this. He is said, by people who had seen him, to have resembled Edwin Booth in some of the gestures and attitudes he used, and in certain aspects of his countenance.[808] His voice was thrilling, and wonderfully modulated. It must be remembered that he came of actor parents, and seems to have markedly inherited their gifts. There was always about him the air of the stage, something startling, arresting and dramatic. He seemed, to many, like a great tragedian off-stage, yet forever in the pose of his part. In the lecture on *Eureka,* Poe became the high priest unveiling the mysteries of God and Nature. So convinced was he himself, that, while the play lasted, the audience remained spell-bound, going away impressed, only to wonder later what it was all about.

The reports in the papers were of course ludicrous. Poe was grieved, and enclosed abstracts of the lecture to his friends, "to eke out a chance of your understanding what I really did say: I add a loose summary of my propositions and results:"

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[807] Poe to Eveleth, January 4, 1848. Prof. James Southall Wilson's *Poe-Eveleth Letters Pamphlet,* page 19.

[808] Edward V. Valentine of Richmond to the author, July, 1925. Mr. Valentine made a bust of Edwin Booth, and also saw Poe.

The General Proposition is this — Because Nothing was, therefore All Things are.

1. An inspection of the universality of Gravitation — *i.e.,* of the fact that each particle tends, not to any one common point, but to every other particle — suggests perfect totality or absolute unity, as the source of the phenomenon.

2. Gravity is but the mode in which is manifested the tendency of all things to return into their original unity — is but the reaction of the first Divine Act.

3. The law regulating the return — *i.e.,* the law of Gravitation — is but a necessary result of the necessary and sole possible mode of equable irradiation of matter through space: this equable irradiation is necessary as a basis for the Nebular Theory of Laplace.

4. The Universe of Stars (contradistinguished from the Universe of Space) is limited.

5. Mind is cognizant of Matter only through its two properties, attraction and repulsion: therefore Matter is only attraction and repulsion: a finally consolidated globe-of-globes, being but one particle, would be without attraction — *i.e.,* gravitation: the existence of such a globe presupposed the expulsion of the separative ether which we know to exist between the particles as at present diffused: thus the final globe would be matter without attraction and repulsion: but these are matter: then the final globe would be matter without matter — *i.e.,* no matter at all: it must disappear. Thus Unity is Nothingness.

6. Matter, springing from Unity, sprang from Nothingness — *i.e.,* was created.

7. All will return to Nothingness, in returning to Unity. . . . What I have propounded will (in good time) revolutionize the world of Physical and Metaphysical Science. I say this calmly — but I say it.[809]

For obvious reasons, in a biographical narrative, it is not possible to discuss *Eureka* here. It contains what is, at *best,* a highly and cleverly elaborated sophistry. There are irreconcilable inconsistencies of thought in its thesis, with misapplications and misapprehensions of the data of science, even at the time that it was written (1847). Its chief virtue resides, even now, in a certain grandeur of imagination, and a vast breadth of detached vision, almost lyrically expressed at times in magnificent cosmic analogies. A successful apology for it cannot be made, and there is no necessity for doing so, when the central figure of a biography is not projected with the bias of a prejudice which calls for heroic propaganda. In justice, however, it must be said that *Eureka* cannot be easily brushed aside. It is by no means a fit subject for the sallies of " rash bavin wits." It must be remembered, in considering it in connection with Poe's life and the nature of his intellect, that the man was very ill, mentally and physically, when he wrote it. Despite that fact, it shows a certain logical ingenuity of no mean stamp, and a surprising scope and vigor as a synthesis of certain tendencies in early Nineteenth Century thought. Considerably more is to be learned from *Eureka,* even now, by pointing out and comprehending exactly where and why Poe was *wrong,* than by understanding why many of his contemporaries, who did not dare, nor fail so greatly, are so unimportantly *right.*[810]

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[809] Poe to Eveleth, New York, February 29, 1848.

One thing can be chronicled with certainty. The lecture on the universe did not provide sufficient cash to enable Poe to start on his mundane tour to solicit subscribers for the *Stylus.* Poe had hoped for three or four hundred in his audience. He had been forced to ask the Society Library to waive the payment in advance for the lecture hall, $15, and must, in the end, have come out of the affair with something less than $50, at best.[811] His enthusiasm for his theories was not a bit abashed by this, however. One catches a glimpse, about this time, of a man exalted. He now offered *Eureka* to George P. Putnam, lately of the firm which had published *The Collected Tales,* and *The Poems,* and, in an interview with the publisher, discovered his unbounded hopes and faith in the importance of the " discoveries " in *Eureka* by suggesting an edition of 50,000 at once. Mr. Putnam was patient and kindly. He divided the estimate of the enthusiastic and exalted author by 100, and published an edition of 500, which sold very slowly.

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[810] A critique of *Eureka* has been left out of the text here as the bulk of an adequate discussion precludes its being included in a work of limited and biographical scope. There is no adequate discussion of *Eureka* extant. An attempt to relate it with modern discoveries in physics and astro-physics would be valuable and interesting. Einstein, and recent experiments in the nature of electricity, the behavior of atoms, and cathode rays might be included in the discussion.

[811] Poe to H. D. Chapin, Fordham, January 17, 1848. Mrs. Shew aided Poe to get permission to use the Library hall. At this time, Poe also thought of seeing John Neal about delivering a lecture at Portland, Maine.

Eureka: A Prose Poem, By Edgar A. Poe, New York: Geo. P. Putnam, of late firm of "Wiley & Putnam," 155 Broadway. MDXXXXLVIII, — a small book in board bindings published in March, 1848, was Poe's tenth published volume, the last of his lifetime. It was a 12mo of 143 pages. "With profound Respect," this work is dedicated to Alexander Von Humboldt.

PREFACE

To the few who love me and whom I love — to those who feel rather than to those who think — to the dreamers and those who put faith in dreams as in the only realities — I offer this Book of Truths, not in its character of Truth-Teller, but for the Beauty that abounds in its Truth; constituting it true. To these I present the composition as an Art-Product alone: — let us say as a Romance; or, if I be not urging too lofty a claim, as a Poem.

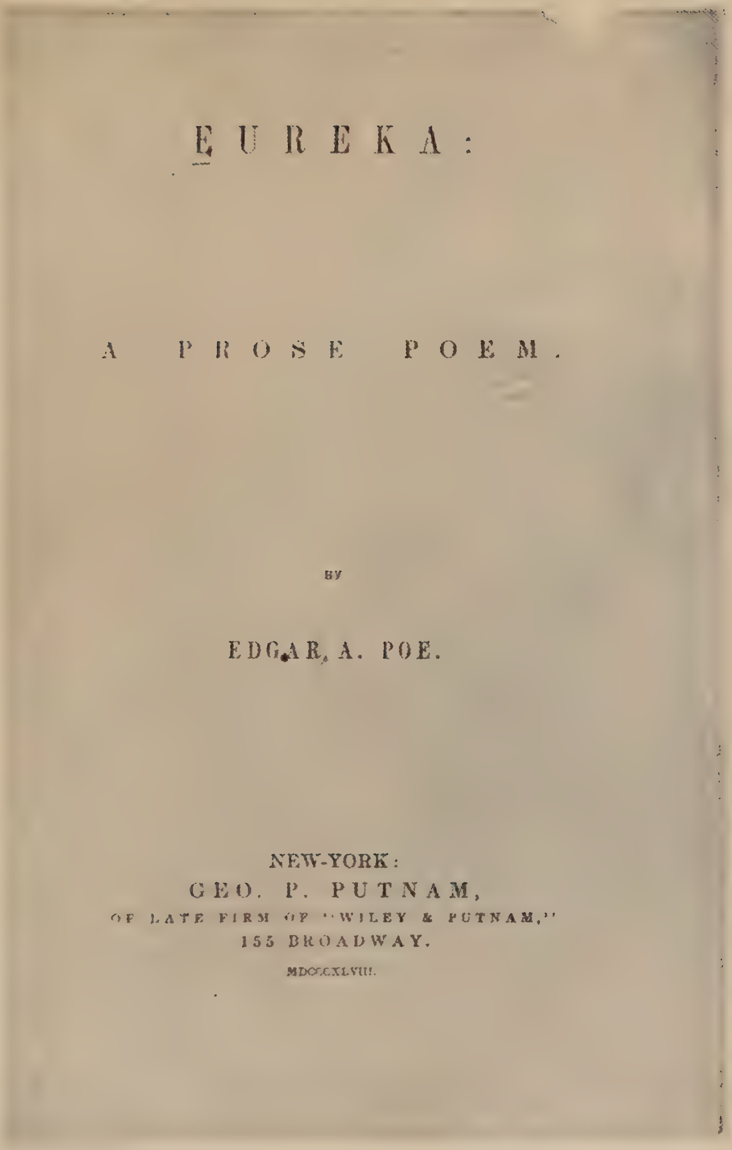
What I here propound is true: — therefore it cannot die: — or if by any means it be now trodden down so that it die, it will "rise again to the Life Everlasting."

Nevertheless it is as a Poem only that I wish this work to be judged after I am dead.

E. A. P.

After which follow 136 pages of text.

The returns from the book were small, and very slow to come in, so Poe now went ahead with plans to lecture elsewhere, *i.e.*, at Lowell and Providence. The Lyceum idea was just getting under way. It had developed from the Sunday lecture. These were often delivered in the afternoon, and even in the evenings from pulpits. The inevitable opposition of the clergy to anything secular or interesting invading their sacrosant field, soon developed, and various societies were soon organized over the country that imported lecturers and people of note to the local circle of *literati* or *cognescenti*. New England, the East, the middle West, and a few places in the South took up the idea eagerly, and lecturers and propagandists of all kinds began to make the rounds of city, town, and village. Mrs. Oakes Smith was the first woman to appear publically before circles of some prestige. Later on, these Lyceums were turned over to the slavery question and trouble ensued. In 1848, Poe was preparing a new lecture to raise money



EUREKA:

A PROSE POEM.

BY

EDGAR A. POE.

NEW-YORK:
GEO. P. PUTNAM,
OF LATE FIRM OF "WILEY & PUTNAM,"
155 BROADWAY.
MDCCCXLVIII.

Title Page of *Eureka*

New York 1848

The tenth and last of Poe's works issued in his lifetime

Courtesy of a New York Collector

for the *Stylus*. *Eureka* proving not to be a popular subject, he now turned to his *Philosophy of Composition* and *The Poetic Principle* which Graham had bought in manuscript, and began to turn them to account on the platform. These lectures included the recitation of poetry, his own, and selected bits from others with which he was able to make an impression.

In February, 1848, there was a Valentine Party at Miss Lynch's which Poe did not attend, as he was now *persona non grata* to most of the *literati*. At this gathering some verses from Mrs. Helen Whitman addressed to *The Raven* were read. These later on paved the way to an important affair with the " Seeress of Providence."

The rest of the Spring and Summer was taken up with the publication of *Eureka,* correspondence with Eveleth, and the disturbing vicissitudes of the friendship with Mrs. Shew. Of all the women with whom Poe was intimate during the latter years, Marie Louise Shew seems to have shown the most sterling essentials of a well-rounded vigorous personality. She was the daughter of a doctor, and, as has been previously noticed, herself a nurse with considerable medical education and experience, as well as the friend of physicians. This practical acquaintance, and familiarity with the essential physical verities of life endowed her with a genuine pity and humanity, and saved her from the quagmire of spiritualism and æsthetic sentimentality in which so many of the starry sisterhood wallowed. She understood Poe, although she did not read his poetry and stories, unless addressed to herself, and she sympathized with the difficulties of his temperament, and his physical infirmities. More than this, she brought him food and clothing in time of bitter need, and made her house a haven for him after the death of Virginia.

Poe, on his part, began by regarding her with respect and gratitude, and ended by allowing her sympathy to lead him into an utter dependency, worship, and affection which became so pronounced that Mrs. Shew was forced to end her ministrations and association. In the Spring of 1848, Poe was much at her house. After Virginia's death it was like a second home to him.

Mrs. Shew had permitted him to help, and gladly accepted his aid in furnishing her drawing-rooms. This he had done after the canons of taste announced in his *Philosophy of Furniture.*[534]

> Louise! my brightest, most unselfish of all who ever loved me! . . . I shall have so much pleasure in thinking of you and yours in that music room and library. Louise, I give you great credit for taste in these things, and I know I can please you in the purchases. During my first call at your house after my Virginia's death, I noticed with so much pleasure the large painting over the piano, which is a masterpiece, indeed; and I noticed the size of all your paintings, the scrolls instead of set figures of the drawing room carpet, the soft effect of the window shades, also the crimson and gold. . . .[534] I was charmed to see the harp and piano uncovered. The pictures of Raphael and the 'The Cavalier' I shall never forget — their softness and beauty! The guitar with the blue ribbon, music-stand and antique jars! I wondered that a little country maiden like you had developed so classic a taste and atmosphere. . . .[812]

"The little country maiden" had also developed a classic common sense that read Mr. Poe, if she did not read his works, like a book. Poe was more than willing to be her "patient," and under her tactful care and diagnosis. He regarded her, like all women who showed marked sympathy with

> The desire of the moth for the star,
> Of the night for the morrow —

Lines, from Shelley, which he once pointed out as the truest characteristic of hopeless love that he knew. Israfel, it seems, could not think of any love but the "highest love," *i.e.*, a hopeless love, and was fond of harping on the theme both in ink and conversation.

The Shew house was close to a large New York church and there, after the death of Virginia, we hear of Poe's attending service with Mrs. Shew. He sang well, she remarked, in a fine "tenor" voice, and knew all the responses. His mind must have traveled back to the old Monumental Church at Richmond, with Frances Allan standing hand in hand with a child in long past, golden days. It is one of the few records known of Poe in church in manhood.[813] The sermon touched on a theme that reminded him of Virginia, and reduced him to despair.

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[812] Poe to Mrs. Shew, undated, "Sunday night," — Spring of 1848. Harrison, *Letters,* vol. II, page 297, quotes.

Sometime later in the Spring of 1848, Poe paid a visit to Mrs. Shew's house which resulted in the writing of *The Bells,* next to *The Raven,* his most popular poem.[814]

Poe and Mrs. Shew retired to a little conservatory overlooking a garden, where they had tea. He complained to his hostess that he had to write a poem, but had no inspiration. Mrs. Shew, to help him, brought pen, ink, and paper, and, while they sat there, the sound of church bells filled the air, and fell almost like a blow of pain on Poe's hypersensitive ears and jangled nerves. He pushed the paper away saying, " I dislike the noise of bells to-night, I cannot write. I have no subject, I am exhausted." Mrs. Shew then wrote on the paper, " The bells, the little, silver bells " — and Poe finished a stanza, again almost relapsing into a state of coma. Mrs. Shew then urged him again, beginning a second stanza with " The heavy iron bells." Poe finished two more stanzas, heading them " by Mrs. M. L. Shew," after which he was completely unable to proceed. After supper he was taken upstairs and put to bed, where he appears to have lapsed into a coma. Mrs. Shew called Dr. Francis in. The Doctor and Mrs. Shew sat by the bedside and noted his symptoms. The pulse was very weak and irregular, and caused the doctor to say, *" He has heart disease, and will die early in life."* Mrs. Shew had previously noted the symptoms also. Both of them felt that Poe was nearly dying, and that he was close to the verge of insanity. He remained for the night, but did not seem to realize his danger. The end was indeed near.

During the remainder of 1848, and part of 1849, *The Bells* went through many revisions. Three versions of it are known before it made its final public appearance in *Sartain's Union Magazine* for November, 1849, with the following notice:

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[813] Poe attended church with Mrs. Shelton in Richmond in 1849.

[814] Ingram: from a portion of Mrs. Shew's diary. Parts of this diary were read to the author by Prof. James Southall Wilson of the University of Virginia in July, 1925. Ingram gives only portions of the full account.

> There is a curious piece of literary history connected with this poem. . . . It illustrates the gradual development of an idea in the mind of a man of original genius. This poem came into our possession about a year since — (December, 1848). It then consisted of eighteen lines! They were as follows:
>
> THE BELLS, — A SONG
>
> The Bells! — hear the bells!
> The merry wedding-bells!
> The little silver bells!
> How fairy-like a melody there swells
> From the silver tinkling cells
> Of the bells, bells, bells!
> Of the bells!
>
> The bells! — ah, the bells!
> The heavy iron bells!
> Hear the tolling of the bells!
> Hear the knells!
> How horrible a melody there floats
> From their throats —
> From their deep-toned throats!
> How I shudder at the notes
> From the melancholy throats
> Of the bells, bells, bells!
> Of the bells!
>
> About six months after this we received the poem enlarged and altered nearly to its present size and form, and about three months since, the author sent an alteration and enlargement, in which condition the poem was left at the time of his death.

This kind of revision was typical of Poe's method.

The poem, however, was not of such a sudden birth as Mrs. Shew imagined. It would be possible to show that the poet had long contemplated writing a poem on the subject. Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*, a source from which Poe adapted a number of items, suggests a poem on the subject of bells. A clipping said to have been found in Poe's note-book from *Poulson's Philadelphia American Daily Advertiser*, an obscure sheet, supplied the following here closely paraphrased:

> St. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, first introduced bells into the Roman

Compagnia in 409. A bell was then called Nola or Compagnia. Then they were called (after) saints, then toc-saint, hence toc-sin. Pliny reports that ages before his era bells were used and were called *Tintinnabula*. . . .[815]

The inference is plain. It seems more truly the mark of a great creative mind that, out of such dross as this, Poe was able to seize the nugget of the word which most people suppose him to have coined. It was from such dry sources that the inspiration came, and not from the bottle.[816]

Mrs. Shew speaks of Poe's sleeping twelve hours after this collapse, and of his being taken home to Fordham by Dr. Francis — "the old man was odd but very skilful." Poe was evidently close to exhaustion. One must regard him, now, as being so delicately over-strung that the slightest emotional stress produced results out of all proportion to the cause. He was now, beyond doubt, in a thoroughly abnormal condition, and subject to delirious spells, and hours of wandering out of which he emerged to remember nothing of what happened. At times his sleep resembled a coma. It seems to have been during the approach of one of these periods, when in a half-exhausted, sub-conscious state, that he produced the first draft of *The Bells*. It was finished and given an intellectual unity, from time to time, later on.[814]

On one occasion, Mrs. Shew says that Poe, in a half dream-like state, told her of a trip he had made to Spain where he had fought a duel, and had been nursed by a Scotch lady whose name he could not divulge. He showed Mrs. Shew a scar on his arm or shoulder which he said he had then received. From Spain, Poe went to Paris, where he said he wrote a novel that had later been brought out under Eugene Sue's name, etc., etc. This, of course, was a half delirious recital of mythical events that has tended to confuse some biographers who desired to lay stress on Poe's foreign experiences and background.[814]

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[815] J. H. Whitty, *Poems*, notes on *The Bells*. The final draft of the poem was finished February 8, 1849, see Poe to Annie, same date. F. W. Thomas cherished manuscript copy of *The Bells*. Poe also told Thomas that Dickens' *Chimes* was the final inspiration; from it comes the "high, high, higher up." See Poe's remark on lines in *The Valley of Unrest* in the *American Whig Review* of April, 1845, etc., etc., etc. This poem has one of the longest and most intricate history of any of Poe's poems.

[816] Also see Woodberry, 1909, pages 258, 259, for a similar version of the sources of the *Bells*.

Friendship with a man in this state was exceedingly difficult. Poe's dependence, and affection for Mrs. Shew alarmed a woman of her experienced and common sense type. She realized that it could not go on. At the same time, she plainly saw that he needed the care and affection that only an acknowledged member of his family circle could provide. She undoubtedly advised Poe to look about him, and to marry someone who could, at once, provide him the means of existence, and the care of a wife. Dr. Francis is said to have warned the poet that, unless he gave up all stimulants and excesses, the end was near. For a short time Poe seems to have heeded this, and to have restrained himself. Mrs. Shew now withdrew in a kindly, but firm way from further intercourse, realizing that she had done all that she could, and that any further intimacy would find her involved in the same kind of gossip which had driven Mrs. Osgood to Albany. In June, Poe received a letter from Mrs. Shew saying that her visits to Fordham, and his visits to her must cease.[817] It was kindly but explicit. A glimpse into Poe's state of mind, and the result of his platonic friendship with this fine woman who had saved his life, and who now refused to be compromised, may best be obtained by reading the poet's reply written from his retreat at Fordham:

> Can it be true, Louise, that you have the idea fixed in your mind to desert your unhappy and unfortunate friend and patient? You did not say so, I know, but for months I have known you were deserting me, not willingly, but none the less surely — my destiny —
>
> ' Disaster, following fast and following faster, till his song one burden bore —
> Till the dirge's of his Hope, that melancholy burden bore —
> Of " Never-nevermore." '
>
> So I have had premonitions of this for months. I repeat, my good spirit, my loyal heart! Must this follow as a sequel to all the benefits and blessings you have so generously bestowed? Are you to vanish like all I love, or desire, from my darkened and ' lost soul ' ? I have read over your letter again and again, and cannot make it possible, with any

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[817] This is distinctly implied in Poe's reply.

degree of certainty, that you wrote it in your right mind. (*I know you did not without tears of anguish and regret.*) Is it possible your influence is lost to me? Such tender and true natures are ever loyal until death; but you are not dead, you are full of life and beauty! Louise you came in (refers to some time when Mrs. Shew had been nursing him) in your floating white robe — ' Good morning, Edgar.' There was a touch of conventional coldness in your hurried manner, and your attitude, as you opened the door to find Muddie, *is my last remembrance of you.* There was love, hope, and *sorrow* in your smile, instead of love, hope, and *courage,* as ever before. O Louise, how many sorrows are before you! Your ingenious and sympathetic nature will be constantly wounded in its contact with the hollow, heartless world; and for me, alas! *Unless some true and tender, and pure womanly love saves me, I shall hardly last a year longer alive!* [818] A few short months will tell how far my strength (physical and moral) will carry me in life here. How can I believe in Providence when *you* look coldly upon me? Was it not you who renewed my hopes and faith in God? . . . and in humanity? Louise, I heard your voice as you passed out of my sight leaving me . . . ; but I still listen to your voice. I heard you say with a sob, ' Dear Muddie,' I heard you greet my *Catarina* (the cat) but it was only as a memory . . . nothing escaped *my ear,* and I was convinced it was not your generous self . . . repeating words so foreign to your nature — to your tender heart! I heard you sob out your sense of duty to my mother, and I heard her reply, ' Yes, Louise . . . yes,' . . . Why turn your soul from its true work for the desolate to the thankless and miserly world? . . . I felt my heart stop, and was sure I was then to die before your eyes. Louise, it is well — it is fortunate — you looked up with a tear in your dear eyes, and raised the window, and talked of the guava you had brought for my sore throat. Your instincts are better than a *strong man's reason for me* — I trust they may be for *yourself.* Louise, I feel I shall not prevail — a shadow has already fallen upon your soul, and is reflected in your eyes. It is *too late* — you are floating with the cruel tide . . . it is not a common trial — it is a fearful one to me. Such rare souls as yours so beautify this earth! So relieve its toils and cares, it is hard to lose sight of them even for a short time . . . but you must know and be *assured* of my regret and sorrow if aught I have written has hurt you. *My heart never wronged you.* I placed you in *my esteem — in all solemnity* — beside the friend of my boyhood — the mother of my schoolfellow, of whom I told you, and as I have repeated in the poem (*To Helen*) . . . as the truest, tenderest of this world's most womanly souls, and an angel to my forlorn and darkened nature. I will not say ' lost soul ' again, for your sake. I will try to overcome my grief for the sake of your unselfish care of me in the past, and in life or death. I am ever yours gratefully and devotedly.[819]

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[818] These italics are here supplied as being prophetic, and as Poe's own comment on his need for feminine affection, and an indication of his precarious health. He lived only a little over a year after this letter.

EDGAR A. POE

Thus Mrs. Shew had departed, leaving her words of farewell ringing in his ears — and her advice. *Feminine sympathy* was now essential to Poe. He seems to have desired an angel rather than a woman, and he now deliberately set about to bring one home to his cottage whence both his good angels, Virginia and Marie Louise, had departed.

In the poetry of Helen Whitman, Poe thought that he detected that quality and temperament which was his necessity, and he now set about to find this kindred soul. Strangely enough, disastrously, in fact, across this spiritual chase, passed the vision of another woman whom he accidently met. It was Mrs. Annie Richmond. To these, to make emotional confusion thrice confounded, was shortly added the name of his boyhood love, Sarah Elmira Royster (Mrs. Shelton), — and, through it all, danced the ghost of a magazine striving to be born.

Never was so fast disintegrating a nature torn amid so many woes and loves. Behind it all was " Muddie," patient, but ever hoping and urging, conniving, when necessary, in little harmless, but important subterfuges, to provide her dear Eddie with a wife who might bring him a competence, and the protection of a preserving love. " Muddie " was no longer his mother-in-law and aunt, but his mother in every act and thought. Mrs. David Poe had now been sleeping in her unmarked grave at St. Johns in Richmond for thirty-seven years. Her husband's sister had long taken her place:

> Because the angels in the Heavens above,
>   Devoutly singing unto one another,
> Can find amid their burning terms of love,
>   None so devotional as that of ' mother,'
> Therefore by that sweet name I long have called you;
>   You who are more than mother unto me,

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[819] *Ingram,* ii, pages 157–159. Woodberry also quotes, 1909, vol. II. pages 261–264.

Filling my heart of hearts, where God installed you,
In setting my Virginia's spirit free.
My mother — my own mother, who died early,
Was but the mother — of myself; but you
Are mother to the dead I loved so dearly,
Are thus more precious than the one I knew,
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul life.[820]

It was during this last Summer at Fordham, in 1848, that Poe is said to have had a portrait painted by Charles Hine, a Connecticut artist. Poe is shown in a dressing gown, seated by his table with a bust of Pallas, some books, and a manuscript upon it. He is depressed and cynical, and bears the stamp of great suffering in the drawn lines of his face. The contrast between the right and left sides of the countenance is so startling as to defy description. Very little is known about the history of this picture which has but recently come to light.[821]

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[820] Probably written later than the time order implied in the text indicates. Published in *The Flags of Our Union,* Boston, July 7, 1849, under title of *To My Mother.*

[821] *Facts About Poe,* Prof. James Southall Wilson. This is the most authentic text for the discussion of portraits of Poe. Hine also painted a portrait of Walt Whitman.

CHAPTER XXV

A Handkerchief Soaked in Ether

SARAH HELEN WHITMAN, the " Seeress of Providence," whom Poe had seen once, " once only," three years before, standing in her doorway, one night on Benefit Street, was the recipient of " some of the most perfect literary love letters " ever written.[822] To her they were the greatest, and withal, the most mysterious event of a life largely given over to listening to noises on the alleged other side of the veil, — to the rappings, the twitterings, and flutterings which intrigued, mystified, amused, and bemused an entire generation of Americans who traveled the road to Endor.

In the Summer of 1848, the ghosts held a caucus, principally in the northeastern part of the United States. Tables began to jig and dance, curtains became pregnant with the spirit of nothing, ladies went into trances — and hysterics. Spiritualism and kindred movements became the rage. There were few who were not at least impressed. It was a movement that had its roots much deeper, in the peculiar suppressions and conventions, the great underlying sadness of North America that has been mistaken for a literary convention, but that gripped the country, especially the young men and the middle-aged women, from 1820 to 1860, if pens ever wrote truth, and pages can be read aright.

We can laugh, now, because we have forgotten, or do not know any longer what it was that drove thousands of rational people into intolerable little parlors, to holding hands, to listening expectantly — hoping for great messages from old tables about which their grandparents had gathered to discuss tea and politics, or cards and wine — we have forgotten what it was that made it necessary to " get beyond." There were, in 1848, two principal ways to escape the intolerant and, *par conséquence,* intolerable boredoms of what may be termed the official family existence of the Republic. One way was to go West; the other was to go " Beyond." Both, in the final analysis, were spiritual adventures upon different planes.

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[822] See Chapter XXIII, page 661.

This restlessness for escape, inspiration, hysteria, or adventure, by whatever term one may choose to denominate it, was widespread, and had deep ramifications all over the country.[823] New England, of course, claimed for its own manifestations the usual endemic virtues. Yet the ghosts there might merely be said to be a little more rampant, if ghosts can be, their spirituality, especially about Boston and Concord, seven times refined. Providence, Rhode Island, was, to a certain extent, included in the holy territory. There, in the '40's and '50's, " the local citizens of the world of souls of Transcendentalism " discussed, as other groups were doing elsewhere, the life of the spirit transcendent above all material or physical demands, and discussed it so well and long that mysticism and idealism slipped imperceptibly into occultism, mesmerism, and spiritualism.

Mrs. Helen Whitman was the inspiration of the Providence group, and of quite an important little vortex of correspondence, and scattered friends who came under her influence. She was delicately beautiful, veiled, mysterious, and elusive. She dressed in light silken draperies, and, as she passed, shielding her eyes from the too garish light of day by a fan, one glimpsed a spiritual dream of womanhood gliding by upon dainty slippers, followed by undulating scarfs — and a faint, deathly-sweet odor of a handkerchief soaked in ether.

Life was just a little too vivid for this " Helen of a Thousand Dreams " — that is, real life — " her pleasant rooms were never pervaded by anything but a subdued light," and the ether seems, upon occasions, to have helped to blunt the too-keen edge of things. She had never been very well. She had heart-trouble, and was much given to premature announcements by letter of her imminent departure, and to sorrowful but thrilling farewells to her friends.

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[823] Family letters and diaries in the author's collection show that, by 1852, Spiritualism had emigrated, and was in full swing in Oregon and Washington Territory among the families of the pioneers. Seances were held in covered wagons.

Mrs. Whitman had her own troubles, however, and her means of escape must be charitably left to her own often notable and admirable devices. Mrs. Nicholas Power, her mother, was of a very powerful turn of mind, as far as opinions went. With many of these, her husband seems to have disagreed. During the War of 1812, upon a voyage to the West Indies, he was captured by the British. His return to freedom in 1815, however, did not coincide by some nineteen years with his return to his family in Providence. They had been expecting him in the meanwhile until faith took on the foolish look of credulity. Then Nicholas returned, suddenly. The occasion was thus commemorated by his equally eccentric daughter Anna:

> Mr. Nicholas Power left home in a sailing vessel bound for St. Kitts,
> When he returned, he frightened his family out of their wits. —[824]

Helen's early life had thus been over-shadowed. The eccentric younger sister was a great trial. The girls' father passed away leaving their common-sense mother in charge of three daughters, and a little property of her own. Helen had a passion for flowers, and spent much time in the rose garden behind the red house at Providence, and at the home of her aunt, Mrs. C. J. Bogart at Jamaica, Long Island, where, for a time, she went to a Quaker School. The Bogarts gave Helen her first taste of the world. She developed a fondness for reading novels and for parties, for scribbling verse and dabbling in poetry. In 1828, after a long engagement, she married, at the house of her aunt on Long Island, John Winslow Whitman of Pembroke, Massachusetts, a young lawyer with a sensitive archangelic face. After a few years he died, and, in 1835, Mrs. Whitman went back to live with her mother on Benefit and Church Streets in Providence. In 1838 her portrait, by which she is best known, was painted by Giovanni Thompson.

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[824] *Poe's Helen,* by Caroline Ticknor, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916. This book, one of the best in the Poe bibliography of comment, treats the Whitman-Poe incident in full, and gives an excellent idea of a remarkable American woman of the Nineteenth Century and her contemporaries. The author is in great debt to the volume.

This shows her at thirty-five years of age, as a young widow, ten years before she met Poe.[825]

Mrs. Whitman, who published poetry from time to time, about the end of the 1840's became greatly interested in spiritualism, in which she and Mrs. Oakes Smith found a congenial field. Trances, mediums, and the entire " experimental field " were explored by them. Mrs. Whitman was of too high a quality of mind to be hoaxed. She was " subliminally interested." Mrs. Oakes Smith, although apparently a more virile person, at last completely succumbed. The last reminiscences and utterances of Mrs. Smith, who did much toward the emancipation of women in America, were a babble of " spiritual " twaddle.

It will perhaps serve to throw some light upon Mrs. Whitman to follow her upon a trip to Niagara Falls with Mrs. Oakes Smith, " Mrs. Gould, the trance-poet, and others — made possible by the munificence of a wealthy merchant of New York — seven of us, so companionable that our journey was a dream of enjoyment." [826]

> Travelers learn much of each other to be learned in no other way. Mrs. Whitman conformed but slightly to prevailing fashions or conventionalities. Her dress expressed herself: a slight lace tucker, a veil — now on the head, now in the hand — an invariable fan. Altogether she was a unique and attractive little person. Angels have a right to their own way, and it was natural that we should see only sweetness in the ways of Helena.
>
> As we went through the long corridors of the *Cataract House,* it was needful for someone to follow and pick up the scatterings of our friend. In the flow of conversation, away went a shawl that had been tied carelessly about the waist; this was carefully picked up and retained not to interrupt the flow of the sweet voice in its gentle cadence of words. Next, down went the fan, followed by the veil; but the loss of this was final. In the cars, Mr. Day had provided India rubber air-cushions, which made a nice rest for the head. Mrs. Whitman had adjusted hers by the open window, but the intervention of some pleasant thought induced a turn of the head, *and out went the cushion!* . . .
>
> Sarah Helen Whitman once said of John Neal, ' He is remarkable

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[825] Mrs. Whitman was forty-five years old, and had been a widow for ten years when Poe came a-courting.

[826] *Diary* of Mrs. Oakes Smith, wife of Seba Smith. Extracts are here rearranged out of their order in the *Diary*.

amongst remarkable men — unique, wonderful.' She said this when we together met Mr. Neal at Niagara, and listened to his conversation which was great, even with the stupendous Niagara for accompaniment.

Mr. Neal's pen name it may be recalled was " Jehu O'Cataract."[827]

It must be remembered that all this was Mrs. Whitman seen through the eyes of Mrs. Smith, who doted on her. There was another, and a genuine side. Men such as John Hay, George W. Curtis, Ellery Channing, Horace Greeley, and several others of considerable note, corresponded with her and visited at Providence. Her conversation, at its best, was witty and even biting. She was familiar with French and German literature, and interested in music and painting. Her poetry was the best of any written by the *literati,* and on one or two occasions, attained a genuine note. Mrs. Whitman was aware of what was going on in her world, and played quite an important minor rôle in it. She was undoubtedly the most " civilized " woman whom Poe had ever approached.

Poe, on his part, as we have seen, was not unscathed by the occultism of his time, yet he managed to keep his head above it. His dabbling in it was for purely literary reasons. From it he obtained dramatic material for his art in story and verse, and the pleasure of indulging in enigmatic smiles, and scoffing asides. Andrew Jackson Davis, whose lectures on mesmerism Poe had attended, supplied, for his first book, perhaps the initial idea for *Eureka.*[828] Shortly before Poe and Mrs. Whitman met, we hear from Davis of a visit which Poe paid to his rooms, apparently in search of technical data for *The Case of M. Valdemar.* Davis, who claimed to be able " to look through people," beheld a strange, dark shadow that always lay before Poe, and a background of very dark hills, a sort of mystic and dolorous landscape about his head.

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[827] See Chapter XII, page 256. John Neal was by no means the fool that this passage makes him out, nor is it characteristic of Mrs. Smith. This part of her diary is gushing over Mrs. Whitman.

[828] The author is indebted to S. Foster Damon, Esq., of Harvard University, author of *William Blake, His Philosophy and Symbols,* for calling his attention to the influence of Davis upon Poe. Several interesting references to Poe occur in Davis's books that deserve the further attention of students. Davis's first book presents a cosmogony. See Davis's *The Magic Staff,* page 217, *Events in the Life of a Seer,* pages 18 and 19, *Answers to Questions,* page 63, all referring to Poe.

Poe's own mysticism was purely personal, and the subliminal landscapes which he created in his poetry, prose and landscape sketches were the refuges, and spiritual lands of his own darkened soul. It was for this reason that his poetry was more original than that of any other American poet of the age. It employed a symbolism which was personally unique, but which yet finds an echo, and provides a refuge for those who can glimpse within themselves, or through experience, the islands of spiritual exile, and the scenery along the highways and byways of despair. Such experiences are deep and primary ones, vastly more important than the rational or decorative, and must remain forever an important field for the preoccupation of the poet's art.

Poe's refuge from life was not at the spiritual séance, or in becoming a pioneer. His adventure lay inward down into the ever darker and more mysterious gulfs within. In 1849, there was a great rush to the gold fields of California. It was an Eldorado that attracted many. The comment of "Israfel" was this:

ELDORADO

Gayly bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old,
This knight so bold,
And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length;
He met a pilgrim shadow:

'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be,
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow
Ride, boldly, ride,'
The shade replied,
'If you seek for Eldorado.'[829]

"Israfel" was now definitely bound "down the Valley of the Shadow." The physical man, who was about to set out in search of a wife, and to encounter Annie and Helen Whitman, was a sadly jangled bundle of nerves. Any excess of emotion, he was unable to sustain without the use of stimulants, and stimulants were a fatal method of relief. Occasionally, only two or three times now, before he disappeared over the edge of the world, the troubles of his impossible situation were embodied in a notable expression. For the rest, his pen was all but useless. A contrast of the bibliography of the last three years of Poe's life with those that had preceded it, will, in bulk alone, disclose the evidence, and depict the story of his disintegration.

The appearance of the completely unstrung man from the refuge at Fordham, in the midst of the lives of the three women with whom he was now about to come in contact, was fraught, as might be expected, with tragedy, agony, and frustration. Knowing this, there were, nevertheless, motives which urged him on. He must once more bring someone home to the cottage who could supply that cherishing sympathy, and physical nursing which he could not do without.[818] Means for the support of the home, and for establishing the *Stylus*, the "darling dream of his life," were included. In this course he was supported by the advice of Mrs. Shew, and the necessities of Mrs. Clemm, to whom he owed everything. But, by his pen alone, without the assistance of a dowry, he could no longer support Mrs. Clemm. In the Summer of 1848, sometime in June, the process of wooing began.

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[829] First published in *The Flag of Our Union*, Boston, 1849; Griswold, 1850. See *Dream-Land* for an earlier reference to "Eldorado." This is evidently one of Poe's last poems, about the time of the Gold Rush.

As early as February, Mrs. Whitman herself had opened the door. Miss Lynch, at her Valentine Party, to which she had invited N. P. Willis, Horace Greeley, Miss Sedgwick, Morris, Grace Greenwood, Bayard Taylor, Harte, C. M. Clay, Furness, Margaret Fuller, and Charles Dana, asked Mrs. Whitman to contribute a valentine.[830] Mrs. Whitman had been greatly moved by *The Raven*. Her birthday was the same as Poe's, and she felt drawn to him by his poetry, as he had been attracted by hers. Whispers of Poe's deep impression of the night in Providence, when he had first seen her, had reached her ears. N. P. Willis was addressed at the party as a "City Pigeon," and Mrs. Whitman's valentine poem was to the "Raven." Poe was not going about with the *literati* at the time, as he was under a cloud, but the reading of the valentine made a great sensation.

Oh! thou grim and ancient Raven,
From the Night's Platonic shore,
Oft in dreams, thy ghastly pinions
Wave and flutter round my door —
Oft thy shadow dims the moonlight
Sleeping on my chamber door.

Romeo talks of 'White doves trooping,
Amid crows athwart the night,'
But to see thy dark wing swooping
Down the silvery path of light,
Amid swans and dovelets stooping,
Were, to me, a nobler sight. . . .

Then, Oh! Grim and Ghastly Raven!
Wilt thou to my heart and ear
Be a Raven true as ever
Flapped his wings and croaked 'Despair'?
Not a bird that roams the forest
Shall our lofty eyrie share.[831]

Providence, R. I. — *Feb.* 14, 1848.

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[830] See Chapter XXIV, page 745.

[831] Five stanzas omitted. See *The Poems of Sarah Helen Whitman.*

These verses were sent to Poe by Miss Lynch through Mrs. Osgood. Poe recognized the writing, having seen some of Mrs. Whitman's poetry before. Shortly after, "the Valentine" appeared in the *Home Journal* through the good offices of the "City Pigeon." Poe was thrown into a state of ecstasy upon beholding the lines. He took down his own volume of poems and read *To Helen*. The mystic circle was almost complete.[832]

Shortly afterward, Mrs. Osgood, who understood the reference to the "swans and dovelets," wrote to Mrs. Whitman.

> I see by the *Home Journal* that your beautiful *invocation* has reached the 'Raven' in his eyrie (at Fordham) and I suppose, ere this, he has swooped upon your little dovecot in Providence. May Providence protect you if he has! for his croak is the most eloquent imaginable. He is in truth 'A glorious devil, with large heart and brain. . . .'

Poor little Fanny Osgood was dying of a cough, "which is killing me by inches, and there are not many inches left." She was anxious for news. The "Raven" had not yet "swooped" but he was about to do so.

In June, Mrs. Shew had broken with Poe. At a moonlight party at a neighbor's house at Fordham soon afterward, Maria McIntosh, one of the *literati*, was present and heard Poe raving about Mrs. Whitman, whom he had never met. Apparently, he was as much in love with her *then* as he ever was. Shortly afterward, Miss McIntosh went to Providence. She was a friend of Mrs. Whitman. There the matter rested for a while. A bewildering succession of events now intervened, which greatly help to explain the real nature of Poe's affair with Mrs. Whitman.

Since the publication of *Eureka* in March, aside from his correspondence, Poe had written nothing at all.[833] In July, 1848, through Mrs. Locke, Mrs. Osgood's sister-in-law, Poe arranged for a lecture to be given at Lowell, Massachusetts, Mrs. Locke's home town. The lecture was on *The Poetic Principle*, and was delivered on July 10. A lady, who was present, described Poe upon the occasion:

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[832] Statements in the text about Poe and Mrs. Whitman are made from the letters that passed between them, and from letters of Mrs. Whitman to Mrs. Hewitt, and others of the *literati*, after Poe's death.

[833] An exception to this is the sonnet, *An Enigma* in the *Union Magazine* for March, 1849, addressed to Sarah Anna Lewis, "Stella," the manuscript was sent to Mrs. Lewis in 1847. Mrs. Lewis was not pleased with the "Sarah Anna," see Chapter XXIII, page 000. Griswold, 1850, follows the Lewis manuscript text.

> I saw him first in Lowell, and there heard him give a lecture on poetry, illustrated by readings. His manner of rendering some of the selections constitutes my only remembrance of the evening which so fascinated me. Everything was rendered with pure intonation, and perfect enunciation, marked attention being paid to the rhythm. He almost sang the more musical versifications. I recall more perfectly than anything else the undulations of his smooth baritone voice as he recited the opening lines of Byron's *Bride of Abydos*, —
>
> Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
> Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime, —
>
> measuring the dactylic movement perfectly as if he were scanning it. The effect was very pleasing.
>
> He insisted strongly upon an even, metrical flow in versification, and said that hard, unequally stepping poetry had better be done into prose. I think he made no selections of a humorous character, either in his public or parlor readings. He smiled but seldom, and never laughed, or said anything to excite mirth in others. His manner was quiet and grave. . . . In thinking of Mr. Poe in later years I have often applied to him the line of Wordsworth's sonnet, —
>
> 'Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart.'

It was on this visit to Lowell that Poe met Mrs. Annie Richmond, about whom *Landor's Cottage* is woven. In the story is a description of his first meeting with Annie.[834] Again it was the expression about the eyes which attracted him, the abstraction of womanliness, rather than the woman herself. His great need of, and his desire for sympathy, for some escape from his loneliness, is here evident.

> As no bell was discernible, I rapped with my stick against the door, which stood half open. Instantly a figure advanced to the threshold — that of a young woman about twenty-eight years of age — slender, or rather slight, and somewhat above the medium height. As she ap-

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[834] Poe himself makes this plain by various statements in letters to Annie and elsewhere. He set great store by *The Domain of Arnheim*, and its pendant *Landor's Cottage* as having a hidden "spiritual" meaning.

proached, with a certain modest decision of step altogether indescribable, I said to myself, 'Surely here I have found the perfection of natural, in contradistinction from artificial grace.' The second impression which she made on me, but by far the more vivid of the two, was that of enthusiasm. So intense an expression of romance, perhaps I should call it, or of unworldliness, as that which gleamed from her deep-set eyes, had never so sunk into my heart of hearts before. *I know not how it is, but this peculiar expression of the eye, wreathing itself occasionally into the lips, is the most powerful, if not absolutely the sole spell, which rivets my interest in woman.* 'Romance,' provided my readers fully comprehend what I would here imply by the word — 'romance' and 'womanliness' seem to me[835] convertible terms: and, after all what man truly loves in woman, is, simply, her womanhood. The eyes of Annie (I heard some one from the interior call her 'Annie, darling!') were 'spiritual grey'; her hair, a light chestnut; this is all I had time to observe of her.

It is to be noted in this story that, while the description of the woman is that of Annie Richmond, the description of the cottage is of Poe's own at Fordham, and that Poe thus imagined Annie at home in *his own house* where he so often longed to see her.

There can be no doubt that it was she, of all women, who now most attracted him. He was as near in love with her as he could be, and the hours spent in the bosom of her family with her husband, her sister Sarah, and little Caddy, seemed to him a dream of delight. Both Annie and Sarah, Poe soon called by the name of "sister," the dearest epithet he employed. His experience with Mrs. Richmond ran much the same course as that with Mrs. Shew. The impossible, and intricate relationship which followed was crossed by the malignant, and the well-meant letters of others with whom he had gone through the same formula of platonic friendship.

Poe brought himself to the verge of the grave over Annie. His affair with her, and the simultaneous one with Mrs. Whitman, were too much. The resulting catastrophe revealed to him the inevitable *cul de sac* of his wooings. In the terrible tangle he, at last, attempted to commit suicide. Yet, at the very last, it was to Annie that his thoughts turned, even when he became engaged to Mrs. Shelton in the Fall of 1849.[836]

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[835] This expression, or its equivalents, occurs again and again in Poe's stories and poems. It is undoubtedly peculiarly significant as a symbol. Italics supplied here.

Bearing with him the remembrance of Annie, with whom shortly afterward he began to correspond, Poe returned to New York after the lecture at Lowell. He arrived home July 13. The proceeds of the lecture, and two advances from George P. Putnam made on *Eureka,* now supplied him with sufficient funds to start South in order to get subscriptions for the *Stylus.*[837] On July 16, Poe left New York, while Mrs. Clemm remained at Fordham. Three days later he arrived at Richmond. Here, once more among the acquaintances and haunts of his boyhood, he gave way to drink, and disappeared for two weeks in the lower haunts of the town. John R. Thompson, the editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger,* was accidently informed that the former and now famous editor of his paper was in a serious plight somewhere along the water front. He charitably set out to rescue him:

> If you have ever visited Richmond, you may perhaps know that the business portion of the town and the sites occupied by residences exclusively are distant from the shipping by a mile and a half, so that few persons not actually engaged in commercial affairs ever visit the place at all. As soon as I heard the name of Poe in this connection my worst suspicions were excited, and I at once took a carriage and went to seek him. It was a very warm day. . . . When I reached the purlieus of this abandoned quarter, I learned that such a person had indeed been there, drunk, for two weeks, and that he had gone a few hours previous, without hat or coat, to the residence of Mr. John Mackenzie, some three miles distant in the country, alone and on foot. It was Poe. The next day he called on me with Mr. (Jack) Mackenzie. . . . I did all I could to restrain his excesses and to relieve the pressure of his immediate wants (for he was extremely indigent) but no influence was adequate to keep him from the damnable propensity to drink.[838]

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[836] Nearly all of Poe's commentators pick this or that woman "as the great love of the poet's life." A list of Poe authors, and their favorite candidates for Poe's affection, could be compiled. The reader is here left to nominate his own.

[837] Woodberry is followed here.

[838] Thompson to Patterson, November 9, 1849, *The American* April 11, 1889. Harrison reprints, vol. XVII, page 403. Woodberry, abridges (as followed here), 1909, vol. II, pages 970–971.

Once at Duncan Lodge, the old home of the Mackenzies, Poe was in good hands. He had been welcome there since childhood, and Jack Mackenzie was still a firm friend. Rosalie was also still living there, and Poe paid frequent visits.[839] Most of his time, however, was spent in newspaper haunts. He made the office of the *Messenger* his headquarters. Thompson's descriptions of Poe's doings in Richmond at this time are thought on good authority to be exaggerated.[840]

Poe, it seems, was able to call on Thompson at the *Messenger* office shortly after the spree along the waterfront, and he seemed little the worse for wear. He was also at this time seen about town by Charles M. Wallace, a local historian of some ability and accurate memory, who noted that, although Poe was drinking, he was never in a condition when he could not take care of himself. On one occasion Mr. Wallace was called from his bed by a prominent Richmond newspaper man, probably Thompson or Daniel, to meet Poe who was in a gay but select company of convivial spirits gathered at a neighboring tavern. The company was listening to Poe declaiming *The Raven* and *Eureka*.

When Wallace arrived, he found his famous fellow townsman discussing current events. Poe bowed in a very dignified way when introduced to Wallace, and although the poet's face was flushed and his manner nervous, he was by no means intoxicated. At the request of the by-standers, Poe then began his discourse, which, although it went on for fully an hour, proved to be eloquent and entertaining. It was probably on the atomic nature of the Universe.

J. R. Thompson apparently did not see as much of Poe on this visit as some of his later remarks would seem to indicate. In a letter to P. P. Cooke, written October 17, 1848, only part of which has been published,[841] Thompson said that Poe had left Richmond sometime before, after remaining three weeks in a terribly drunken condition, and after having declaimed *Eureka* in the bar rooms. This is perhaps an exaggerated statement of the incident related by Wallace. According to Thompson, friends tried in vain to get Poe to sober up so that he could write. Thompson himself could get nothing from him but *The Rationale of Verse,* already prepared as a lecture. This he took, he says, out of charity. Poe's periods of lucidity were few and far between. One overhears in these accounts the shuffling of feet in bar rooms, the exalted voice of Poe discoursing in a supra-inspired tone of the atom streams pulsing from the beating heart of Nothing, as *Eureka* is intoned above the clinking of glasses. Mr. Thompson was moved to close his letter to Mr. Cooke with words to the effect that Poe *was* a peculiar fellow.[841]

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[839] Miss Rosalie Poe continued to make her home with the Mackenzies till the Civil War, and its attendant misfortunes overtook the family. An interesting account of a visit by Rosalie Poe to the ruined Duncan Lodge in 1865, occurs in Mrs. S. A. Weiss's *Home Life of Poe*.

[840] See J. H. Whitty, *Poems*, large edition, *Memoir*, pages LXVI, LXVII, also for the account of the "Daniel Duel," Whitty, pages 444, 445, notes.

Despite some ponderable evidence to the contrary, it seems most likely that Poe did not see Mrs. Shelton (Elmira) while in Richmond in 1848. Thompson's statement of his constant intoxication is weakened greatly by many columns of matter which he wrote in his beautiful script at this time, part of which Thompson afterward gave away. There was a review of Mrs. Lewis's poems that appeared in the *Messenger* and a *Literati Paper* about her sent to the *Democratic Review.*

Of Poe's doings further in Richmond at this time, a number of recollections still exist. He remained about six weeks, passing his time about Duncan Lodge, the offices of newspapers, and his bachelor quarters with Pleasants, editor of the *Richmond Whig.* Very little work was done on the *Stylus* scheme, but there were readings in the parlors of friends. Poe saw Dr. Ambler, his old friend Robert Stanard, "Helen's" son, and Robert Sully, the artist, who, it is thought, may have done a portrait of him at this time, or in 1849.[842] He also attempted to call on his first sweetheart, Catherine Potiaux, but was apparently in a condition which denied him admittance. The second Mrs. Allan and her family were no doubt informed of his presence in town, and that he was indulging in drink. John Allan had been buried, and had been sleeping beside his wife Frances, for fourteen years. The second Mrs. Allan and her children, although still known as "the Scotch Allans," were much about in society, and had made the big house at Main and Fifth Streets famous for a rather lavish hospitality.[843] There is no record of Poe having seen his "Aunt Nancy" Valentine, now a jolly middle-aged woman of a "charitable and social turn of mind." There were many affairs at the Mackenzies', however. Mrs. Weiss says that Mrs. Mackenzie had written to Poe, suggesting that he come to Richmond to try his fortunes with his old sweetheart, Elmira (Mrs. Shelton). This, however, is doubtful.

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[841] John R. Thompson to P. P. Cooke, Manuscript, as noted by Mr. Whitty.

[842] Edward V. Valentine, Esq., informed the author in Richmond, in May, 1926, that he knew this portrait had been painted. It is thought to have been lost in a fire.

In Richmond, Poe again came into contact with a Mrs. Clarke, now a widow, with whom he had boarded at the Worthingtons' in 1835, while on the *Messenger*. To her he paid a good deal of attention. Mrs. Clarke deposes about such calls and gives a rather pompous picture:

> If there happened to be friends present he was often obliging enough to read, and would sometimes read some of his own poems, but he would never read *The Raven* unless he felt in the mood for it. . . . One day he came in with his sister and two of the Mackenzies and stopped with me. There were some other people present, and he read *The Raven* to us. He shut out the daylight and read by an astral lamp. When he was through all of us that had any tact whatever spared our comments and let our thanks be brief; for he was most impatient of both. . . . I enjoyed a good deal of his society during the visit in 1848. On his last visit I saw less of him. He was then said to be engaged to a Mrs. Shelton. Some said he was marrying her for her money. There was a good deal of gossip at that time concerning Poe. His intemperate habits especially were much exaggerated and made the most of by those who did not like him. . . . When he was in company at a party, for instance — you might see a little of him in the earlier part of the evening, but he would presently be off somewhere. . . . When a very young man he imitated Byron.[844]

The most intimate reminiscences of Poe, at this time, came from the Mackenzies at Duncan Lodge. It must be remembered that, to Poe, Richmond was home. It was the only place where he did not feel an outcast, but met old boyhood chums on the street. Here his fame was a boon instead of an annoyance and, for the first time since the death of Virginia, he seems to have cast off gloom, and to have returned to a semblance of the more merry and normal self of boyhood days.

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[843] The following reference fifteen years later is significant:

"Mrs. Scotch Allan (Edgar Allan Poe's patron's wife) sent me ice-cream and lady-cheek apples from her farm. John R. Thompson the sole literary fellow I know in Richmond, sent me *Leisure Hours in Town*, by a country parson." *Diary* of Mrs. James Chestnut, Jr., Richmond, November 30, 1863, page 258.

> I am convinced that a great deal of Poe's unhappiness and apparent reserve and solitariness was owing to his obscure home life, which kept him apart from all genial social influences. At the North whenever seen out of his business hours, he appears to have been ' alone ' and solitary, proud and melancholy looking. . . . With a few he was on friendly terms, but of intimate friends or associates he had not one so far as is known.[844]

In Richmond, all this was reversed, and the better and more human part of the man emerged. There can be no doubt that the visit in 1848 prolonged his life for a year. Martha Mackenzie, Jack's sister, was a charming girl, a compound of gaiety and happiness. . . . The stories of her wedding in October, 1848, and of the two weeks celebration, are still remembered in Richmond as a golden streak in silver days.[844]

> One evening, quite late, an alarm of fire was raised, and all the young men of Duncan Lodge, accompanied by Poe, hastened to the scene of disaster, about a mile further in the country. Finding a great crowd collected, and that their services were not required, they sat on a fence looking on, and it was past midnight when they thought of returning home. Gay young Dr. ' Tom ' Mackenzie remarked that it would never do to return in their immaculate white linen suits, as they would be sure to get a ' wigging ' from the old ladies for not having helped to put out the fire, and, besides, they were all hungry, and he knew how they could get a good supper. With that he seized a piece of charred wood and commenced besmirching their white garments and their hands and faces, including Poe's. Arriving at home in an apparently exhausted condition, they were treated by Mrs. Mackenzie herself, who would not disturb her servants, to the best that the pantry afforded, nor was the trick discovered until the following day. Mrs.

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[844] Mrs. Clarke afterward moved to Louisville, where she reminisced. Mrs. Weiss quotes, page 159. Mrs. Weiss, who can be followed safely in matters relating to the Mackenzies, is also further drawn on for the incidents at Duncan Dodge.

Mackenzie laughed, but from Mrs. Carter the mother of two of the culprits, and who was gifted with eloquence, they got the 'wigging' which they had been anxious to avoid. Poe enjoyed it all immensely.[844]

In the garden at Duncan Lodge a number of the young men played leap-frog. Poe, as happy and boyish as they, indulged himself in a sport at which he excelled, and he was seen in the long green alleys of the garden, leaping and skinning over the backs of the others like a bird, easily excelling where his old friend Jack Mackenzie fell down. It is one of the few merry scenes, and almost the last, in which Poe is to be discovered.[844]

Besides private readings at the houses of friends, Poe appeared once in public. Mrs. Mackenzie, it appears, suggested that he should do so, and a reading was announced to be held in the music hall of the old *Exchange Hotel,* for which one hundred tickets were advertised at fifty cents apiece. It was midsummer, and most of the better class of people were out of town. On the night of the reading only thirteen people, including the janitor, appeared. Among them *was said to have been* Mrs. Shelton (Elmira), who sat directly in front of Poe, before the platform. "Poe was cool and self-possessed, but his delivery mechanical and rather hurried, and on concluding he bowed abruptly and retired." Under the circumstances one could not expect much enthusiasm.[845]

By this time Poe's funds were no doubt exhausted. Thompson had helped him by allowing him to write for the *Messenger,* but about the beginning of September, Poe became involved in a quarrel with John M. Daniel, editor of the *Examiner,* that developed into a typically Poesque affair. Bad blood, it seems, existed between Poe and Daniel from the start.[840]

The two could not agree about literature, and there was also a dispute over a debt of some kind. More serious than this, however, Daniel knew one of the Whitman family relations, and was overheard airing his doubts as to the motives of Poe's attentions to Helen Whitman. This came to Poe's ears while he was sitting in a newspaper office. He was infuriated, and wrote forthwith a challenge to Daniel scrawled on a newspaper headsheet. This he had carried to Daniel who refused to take the matter seriously. Poe's newspaper friends also regarded the matter lightly. The great poet, it seems, was not then in a condition to fight a duel. Nevertheless, under the code, satisfaction must be allowed him. After some little time, the matter was arranged.

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[845] This is very doubtful. Mrs. Weiss gives the account but, in this case, seems to have confused Elmira's attendance at the lecture in 1849 with the earlier one. Poe, we may feel fairly certain, did *not* see Mrs. Shelton in 1848.

Daniel, under the plea of not wishing to give publicity to the affair, consented to an interview at the office of the *Examiner*. There he waited alone and met Poe by appointment.

When Poe entered the sanctum, Mr. Daniel was seated quietly at his desk upon which were prominently displayed two very large, old fashioned but murderous looking pistols. Poe drew himself up very haughtily and demanded the reason for the interview. Daniel then explained that in order to avoid trouble with the authorities, the usual formalities might be dispensed with, and the two gentlemen present could satisfactorily settle their difficulties by simply walking to opposite ends of the room and taking a shot at each other.

Poe looked about him. The room was large; Mr. Daniel was very collected; and the two pistols seem to offer a dilemma rather than the choice which had been officially tendered. The grotesque nature of the situation appealed to Poe's sense of humor, and, as he grew more sober and contemplated the pistols, caution gained the day. A few questions and explanations were exchanged and the trouble was patched up.

With evident relief, Poe then, in his inimitable manner, began to relate the story of the challenge sent by Edward Coote Pinkney, the Maryland poet, to Poe's old friend John Neal. There was a decided point to the anecdote as Poe asked Daniel not to turn his affair into ridicule in the columns of the *Examiner* next day, in the same way that Neal had ridiculed Pinkney. This was very neat, as it was Neal who had refused to meet Pinkney. Daniel appears to have appreciated how cleverly Poe had saved his own face by thus putting him, Daniel, in a parallel case with Neal. The matter then ended in laughter, much aided by the arrival of several mutual friends who had remained hidden close by in no very great apprehension of hearing pistol shots, it is said.

Poe then capped the climax by reciting as only he could, Pinkney's well-known toast:

> I fill this cup to one made up of loveliness alone,
> A woman, of her gentle sex the seeming paragon;

After which " all hands " retired to a neighboring bar room where other toasts confirmed the reign of peace.

Helen Whitman now once more enters upon the somewhat jangled scene. During the Summer, in July, Miss McIntosh and Miss Blackwell, who had both visited Poe at Fordham, were walking in the moonlight with Mrs. Whitman in her garden. Miss McIntosh then detailed to Mrs. Whitman Poe's remarks about her made about a month before. Miss Blackwell warned her friend about Poe, but in spite of that, Mrs. Whitman sent him a poem which was unsigned but in her own handwriting. This was sent to Fordham, and, after some delay, reached Poe in Richmond on September 10, shortly after, or about the same time as the abortive " duel " with Daniel.[846] The lines were an obvious bid on Mrs. Whitman's part for the interview which she knew Poe was seeking:

A low bewildering melody
Is murmuring in my ear —
Tones such as in the twilight wood
The aspen thrills to hear
When Faunus slumbers on the hill
And all entrancéd boughs are still.

The jasmine twines her snowy stars
Into a fairer wreath —
The lily through my lattice bars
Exhales a sweeter breath —
And, gazing on night's starry cope,
I dwell with 'Beauty which is Hope.'

Of these lines Poe afterward wrote to Mrs. Whitman:

> . . . but I have not yet told you that your Ms. lines reached me in Richmond on the very day in which I was about to depart on a tour and an enterprise which would have changed my very nature — steeped

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[846] Poe to Mrs. Whitman, October 18, 1848.

> me in a stern, cold, and debasing, although brilliantly gigantic ambition — and borne me 'far, far away' and forever from *you,* sweet, sweet Helen, and from this divine dream of your love.[846]

It is quite plain from the context of this, and from the ostensible reason of Poe's trip to Richmond and the South, that he is not referring either to a possible wooing of Mrs. Shelton, or to the "duel" with Daniel, but to his plans to "tour" the South on the "enterprise" of promoting the *Stylus*.[847] The necessity for the controversy which has centered about this paragraph is difficult to understand. Poe's "gigantic ambition," of course, was to become the arbiter of American letters as editor of the *Stylus*. This was now given up to pursue Mrs. Whitman. He left Richmond immediately, probably on September 10 or 11, and returned to "Muddie" at Fordham, prepared for his Providence campaign. Mrs. Clemm, it is said, did not favor this particular match. Her opposition, if she did oppose, made no difference with Poe, as his subsequent moves clearly demonstrate.

He now secured a letter of introduction from his friend, Miss McIntosh, but, before leaving for Providence, took the precaution of writing a note in a disguised hand, and signed "Edward S. T. Grey," purporting to be from an autograph collector. From the reply to this ruse, he ascertained that Mrs. Whitman was at home. About the end of September, apparently, Poe appeared in Providence, and presented the letter of introduction.[789]

No time was lost: Poe declared that he was in love. "During a walk in the cemetery I said to you while the bitter, bitter, tears sprang to my eyes — 'Helen I love now — now for the first and only time.'" This was in a letter to Mrs. Whitman of October 1, 1848, with which a notable series of love letters began.

The love letters of Edgar Poe and Helen Whitman have come to occupy such an important place in the story of the man, and, of course, *the* place in the history of the woman, that it has been difficult, in the past, justly to evaluate them as records of human passion, or to see them in their proper perspective in the biographies of the authors.

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[847] Considerable controversial material exists about this matter.

A considerable body of literature, mostly controversial, has grown up about these letters, and the events which they detail, the very bulk of which has caused them to loom with an undue importance in the eyes of those who have turned them over, and commented upon them. Several collections of these letters exist in separate places, not only of the love letters themselves, but of Mrs. Whitman's epistles written to Mrs. Hewitt, Ingram, Gill, and others after Poe's death. Mrs. Whitman was a prolific letter writer. She rushed into the breach to defend Poe, and incidentally herself, after the Griswold attack. She became involved in the miserable squabble that went on among the aging and jealous survivors of the *literati* after Poe departed hence, which perplexed, annoyed, and exhausted Ingram, his English biographer.

Ingram attempted, through the conflicting and often deliberately deceptive correspondence of these women, to get at the facts. Most of the petty problems, such as, who was the original of "Annabel Lee"? — and who did the most for Poe at Fordham? — and to just what extent had Griswold lied, forged, and tampered with Poe documents and letters? — have now been satisfactorily settled, or allowed to rest as unimportant.

In reality, all of the aftermath inherent in the Ingram-*literati* correspondence can now be brushed aside, and must be evaluated as a purely cluttering-up process in the difficult work of reconstructing the so extraordinary elements of Poe's character and doings. Those who carefully sifted out the facts in the past deserve credit, but the time has now come when the aura of academic controversy, and the fictitious value of collections of letters, and material dealing with what so and so said long *after* Poe's death, must be cast into the limbo to which the scaffolding which has aided in the erection of the edifice of biography belongs.

The time has also arrived when the love affairs of the poet, and the correspondence in connection with them, must take their true place in his history, in conformity with the value which the events that brought them forth, and the known peculiarities of Poe's nature inevitably demand that they should take. This applies peculiarly to the Whitman episode.

In the first place, it must be remembered that both Poe and

Helen Whitman were literary persons, and specialists in simulating, or recording passion and sentimental love in literary form. In other words, they could, upon demand, write an excellent love letter. The expressions in such letters, when taken at face value, imply a genuine passion behind them. Taken in connection with the known causes, events, and the final outcome of the affair, — and also considered along with the remarks made by both parties at the time, and afterward, — the whole correspondence is removed from the electric rays of genuine human passion at white heat, into the phosphorescent glow of self-interest, romantic adventure and secondary sentimental lovers' phraseology.

The Poe-Whitman letters will be considered here as documents emanating from persons whose idiosyncrasies are known, and as records in connection with the events which they delineate. The Helen Whitman incident, when considered in the perspective of the whole of Poe's biography, boils down to a hectic affair with one of three women who interested Poe from 1848 through 1849. Helen Whitman was one of *two* widows, each of whom, there can be little doubt, Poe hoped to marry for reasons necessary to his domestic comfort, and the realization of his ambitions. She was one of *three* women who engaged his attentions at the last. Of these three, Mrs. Annie Richmond seems to have received the type of affection from Poe which most nearly resembles love.

It is very doubtful if Poe at this time, in his depleted and disorganized condition of body and mind, could, in reality, support, or provide a genuine and complete manly passion for any woman at all. His whole appeal to Helen Whitman was on a sentimental "spiritual comradeship" basis. He appealed to her imagination, her literary self-importance, and her ambition. A year later, Poe became engaged to another widow, this time with the prospect of considerable property. He then disappeared over the edge of the world. To Poe, Helen was an incident disturbing to his pride; to Mrs. Whitman, Poe was the great adventure. To the day of her death she went on attitudinizing, sentimentalizing, worshiping, not her lover but "The Raven"; dressing up as Pallas, and writing second-rate poetry.

Let us be carefully just, and admit that there was inevitably some affection and respect involved. Mrs. Whitman was beautiful, professionally mysterious, and a personage. Poe was handsome, intriguing, romantic and " divine." The friction of two such stars inevitably generated, perhaps at the time, considerable surface heat. It was only skin deep, however. The difficulties they encountered in their courtship are overcome a thousand times every day by normal lovers. Had they really possessed for each other the divine passion they professed, the opposition of relatives, and the tittle-tattle of gossip would have been brushed aside, and Mrs. Whitman would have become famous or pitied as the gifted and romantic partner of Edgar Allan Poe.

In the hectic championing of Poe by Mrs. Whitman, after his death, one senses a feeling of lost opportunity, and the necessity for the worship of an ideal to offset the reality. Poe seems, for awhile, to think that he had found his ideal of disembodied, angelic love. It must also be remembered that both correspondents had their literary reputations to live up to in writing love letters, and that the letters were phrased in the peculiar lovers' conventions of the mid-Nineteenth Century.

Abstractly, the Poe-Whitman correspondence is the essence of romantic passion; historically, it is a record of the flame of sentimental affection under forced draft. It blazed, wavered, and went out. The fuel of sustaining physical love was absent.

Those who desire a purely literary love feast can turn to the available publications of these love letters. For the reasons given above, they will be used here only as throwing light upon the events they serve to narrate. To these events we must now pass on.

Mr. Poe's letter of introduction to Mrs. Whitman was dated September 15, 1848, which leads one to date the first interview in the graveyard at Providence, as about that time. On October first we find Poe writing the first of his literary rhapsodies to Mrs. Whitman. On September twentieth he wrote an open letter to C. F. Hoffman connected with the *Literary World* in reply to a critique on *Eureka,* in which he said, speaking of Laplace: " The *ground* covered by the great French astronomer compares with that covered by my theory, as a bubble compares with the ocean on which it floats," *i.e.*, Laplace was talking about the solar system and nebulæ; Poe was talking about the universe. In the meanwhile, the affair with Mrs. Whitman had already taken its first unfavorable twist.

In the first interview in the cemetery, Poe had compared his love for Mrs. Whitman to that ideal love of his *boyhood* for " Helen " Stanard. It seems to have been from this interview that the story about Poe's haunting " Helen " Stanard's grave, for the most part, took its origin, although he had also told about this early affair in Richmond to Mrs. Shew. Mrs. Whitman afterward gave the details of Poe's own story in *Poe and His Critics* (since published as *Was Poe Immoral*), in which she explains the genesis of the early verses *To Helen*. Poe evidently laid great stress on the similarity of the name; Mrs. Whitman " discovered " that she and Poe were descended from the same ancestry (*sic*),[848] and that their birthdays were the same! Thus the stars had fated their coming together. At the very first Mrs. Whitman had shown Poe her poetry, which expressed a foreboding that he protested against:

> Oh then, beloved, I think on thee
> And on that life so strangely fair,
> Ere yet one chord of Memory
> Hath gathered in Hope's golden hair . . .

Oh, Helen, *why* did you show them to me? There seemed, too, so very especial a purpose in what you did. Their very beauty was cruelty *to me*. . . .

And now, in the most simple words I can command, let me paint to you the impression made upon me by your personal presence. As you entered the room, pale, hesitating, and evidently oppressed at heart; as your eyes rested for one brief moment upon mine, I felt, for the first time in my life, and tremblingly acknowledged, the existence of spiritual influences altogether out of the reach of the reason. I saw that you were Helen — my Helen — the Helen of a thousand dreams. . . . She whom the great Giver of all good had preordained to be mine — mine only — if not now, alas! then hereafter and for ever in the

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[848] Mrs. Whitman seizing on the similarity of sound between her family name " Power," and that of " Poe," invented a magnificent common ancestry for herself and Poe. " He was of the old Norman family of Le Poer, a name conspicuous in Irish annals," etc., etc.

> Heavens. — You spoke falteringly and seemed scarcely conscious of what you said. I heard no words — only the soft voice more familiar to me than my own. . . .
>
> Your hand rested within mine and my whole soul shook with a tremulous ecstasy: and then, but for the fear of grieving or wounding you, I would have fallen at your feet in as pure — in as real a worship as was ever offered to Idol or to God.
>
> And when, afterwards, on those two successive evenings of all-heavenly delight, you passed to and fro about the room — now sitting by my side, now far away, now standing with your hand resting on the back of my chair, while the preternatural thrill of your touch vibrated even through the senseless wood into my heart — while you moved thus restlessly about the room — as if a deep sorrow or a most pronounced joy haunted your bosom — my brain reeled beneath the intoxicating spell of your presence, and it was with no merely human senses that I either saw or heard you. It was my soul only that distinguished you there. . . .

On the very first visit to Providence, Poe, it appears, had proposed marriage. After the interview, before leaving Providence, Poe again visited the cemetery where, characteristically, he had chosen to propose to Mrs. Whitman.

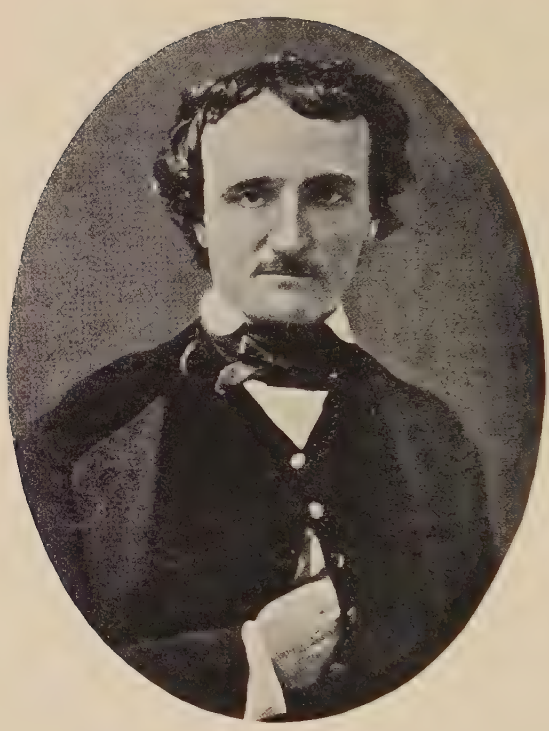
> In the morning (after the interview) I revisited the cemetery. At 6 P.M. I left the city on the Stonington train for New York. I cannot explain to you — since I cannot myself comprehend — the feeling which urged me not to see you again before going — not to bid you a second time *farewell*. I had a sad foreboding at heart. In the seclusion of the cemetery you sat by my side — on the very spot where my arm first tremblingly encircled your waist.

Mrs. Whitman had not given her consent, and shortly after Poe's second visit wrote him raising objections, and giving vent to her forebodings. She was, she felt, not suited or able to support the burdens and incidents which marriage would entail. She was older than Poe, a widow, and an invalid. Four lines carefully scratched out in her letter suggest that there were very definite reasons for not marrying — " I find that I cannot tell you all that I promised. I can only say to you " . . . (here follow the obliterated lines). In addition to this, Mrs. Whitman had already been warned, probably by the Osgoods and others, of

Sarah Helen Whitman
After a painting by C. J. Thompson
Courtesy of Charles Scribner's Sons

Robert Stanard
Son of Jane Stith Stanard, Poe's "Helen"
Reproduced by permission of W. G. Stanard, Esq.

Poe's Mystical Association of the name of "Helen"



Edgar A Poe

From a Daguerreotype taken in the Autumn of 1848 at Providence, R. I.

About this time POE was paying attention to *Mrs.* HELEN WHITMAN, complicated by tender relations with *Mrs.* RICHMOND, "Annie". On November 15, 1848, in a fit of despair, he attempted to commit suicide while in Providence, Rhode Island, by swallowing an ounce of laudanum. The overdose proved an emetic, and he survived the difficulties which might follow an entanglement with "The Raven." The stories of the English controversy, and of the Ellet-Lummis affair had been detailed to her, and her whole letter palpitated with doubt. That Poe's tempestuous wooing had shaken her, there can be no doubt.

It was to this letter that Poe had replied on October 18 from Fordham, pleading, defending himself, and exalting the love of the soul which should transcend all entirely worldly considerations. This was a powerful argument with the transcendental and spiritual Helen. How much Poe believed in this himself, it is difficult to say. He was now laboring under great emotional excitement. The ugly head of gossip, raised by Mrs. Whitman's letter, drove him frantic. Her personality had undoubtedly moved him, and all his pride of nature was involved. Failure threatened to strip him spiritually naked.

> Very soon after Poe's letter of Oct. 18, 1848 and before I had replied to it, he came again to Providence. During this visit he told me much of his earlier life — much of his intimate history — and I became more and more deeply interested in him. He seemed to connect me strangely with his memories of Helen Stanard and often declared to me that he had known and loved me ages ago.
>
> The name of Helen had a strange charm for him from an incident that happened in his boyhood. The mother of one of his schoolmates, who had spoken a few kind words to the imaginative child, died suddenly and left a sweet and sorrowful memory in his heart that seems never to have faded.
>
> I believe that the spirit of her who bore this beloved name, has always hovered around him and that it was in some way, through *her* influence that he was dearer to me. You may think this fanciful, but many strange incidents suggestive of such psychical influences occurred to me at that period of my life. One evening just after dusk, I went into a room dimly lighted by a coal fire. Poe was sitting dreamily musing by the fireside. In a corner of the room hung an unframed picture painted on a very dark background. . . . As I entered the room Poe started up and said, 'Helen, I have had such strange dreams since I have been sitting here that I can hardly believe myself awake! Your picture in the dim light looked so like the face of Robert Stanard that it startled me. You remember that he was the schoolmate of whom I have spoken to you, the son of Mrs. Stanard whom I loved so well. I never noticed the resemblance before, but when you *see him,* as one day you will, you will see how strikingly this picture resembles him.'

The visit to Richmond had evidently renewed in Poe most vividly his memories of his boyhood upon which he now, in a half ecstatic and highly nervous state, pondered and dreamed. Richmond, it may be taken for granted, was the home to which his wandering and exiled heart returned all through his life. From his remarks to Mrs. Whitman it would seem that, after marrying her, he planned to live in Richmond.

From Providence, Poe went on to Lowell, Massachusetts, where he delivered another lecture. Here he once more visited Annie (Mrs. Richmond) at the village of Westford. That "Annie" greatly moved Poe, it is perfectly evident. She and her sister Sarah, both of whom he called "sister," he took into his confidence. In his harassed and nervous state, the quiet and peace of the normal home of the Richmonds seemed like heaven to him. There were walks "to look at the hills," in the landscape evidently under the haze of the love that he endowed it with in *Landor's Cottage*. Mrs. Richmond's sister, Sarah, a young girl at the time, describes him:

> My memory photographs him, sitting before an open wood fire, in the early autumn evening, gazing intently into the glowing coal, holding the hand of a dear friend — 'Annie' — while for a long time no one spoke, and the only sound was the ticking of the tall old clock in the corner of the room.

Poe remained some days with the Richmonds, soothed by "Annie's" comforting presence. He was awaiting Mrs. Whitman's decision.

About the second of November, he received from her an indecisive letter. This, and the complication of his now undoubtedly affectionate feeling for Mrs. Richmond, threw him into a state of nervous excitement closely akin to insanity. Poe wrote to Mrs. Whitman that he would see her in Providence on November fourth, and left the Richmond house for the interview with Helen, first extracting a promise from Mrs. Richmond that she (Annie) would visit him upon his death-bed. While Poe was at Westford, waiting to hear from Mrs. Whitman, *he had discovered that he could not live without Mrs. Richmond!* In his disorganized and weakened condition, the emotional conflict was more than he could bear.

Nevertheless, in a half comatose condition, he set out for Providence, but once arrived there, the agony of his emotional dilemma reduced him to a state that made him forget, or unable to bring himself to see Mrs. Whitman. He says, in a letter written three weeks later to " Annie ":

> I remember nothing distinctly from that moment (*the parting with 'Annie'*) until I found myself in Providence. I went to bed and wept through a long, long, hideous night of Despair — When the day broke, I arose and endeavored to quiet my mind by a rapid walk in the cold, keen air — but all *would* not do — the Demon tormented me still. Finally, I procured two ounces of laudanum, and without returning to my hotel, took the cars back to Boston. . . .

Arrived in Boston, a town filled with many unhappy memories for Poe, it now occurred to him, in the emotional impasse at which he had arrived, to put an end to his existence in the same town where it had begun thirty-nine years before. Whether or not the conflict which went on in his nature was a primary one, can best be judged by what occurred. He had now arrived at the confines of endurance. Whatever happened, however, he desired " Annie " to come to his death-bed, for —

> . . . When I arrived (*in Boston*) I wrote you (*'Annie'*) a letter in which I opened my whole heart to you — to *you*. . . . I told you how my struggles were more than I could bear. I then reminded you of that holy promise which was the last I exacted from you in parting — that promise that under all circumstances, you would come to me on my bed of death. I implored you to come *then,* mentioning the place where I should be found in Boston. Having written this letter, I swallowed about half the laudanum, and hurried to the Post Office, *intending not to take the rest until I saw you* — for I did not doubt for one moment, that Annie would keep her sacred promise. But I had not calculated on the strength of the laudanum, for before I reached the Post Office my reason was entirely gone, and the letter was never put in. Let me pass over — my darling sister — the awful hours that succeeded. A friend was at hand, who aided me. . . . It appears that, after the laudanum was rejected from my stomach, I became calm, and to a casual observer, sane — so that I was suffered to go back to Providence.

Having thus failed to obtain another interview with Mrs. Richmond, even at the cost of trying to make it his death-bed scene — evidently Poe desired to die in her arms, — he now descended upon Providence to continue his suit with Mrs. Whitman. His face was distorted by his terrible sufferings, his eyes out of focus, and his mouth drawn all awry. It is that countenance which, unfortunately, has become best known to the world; the distorted face, the two sides of the man at conflict, which suggests his own terrible predicament, and perhaps a lesion of the brain.

Wandering about Providence half distracted, and without any sense of social conventions, he called upon Mrs. Whitman at so early an hour that she could not see him. She wrote to him at the hotel suggesting a meeting at the Athenæum later on, a favorite classical haunt of Mrs. Whitman. Poe replied (November 7, 1848) saying he was *very* ill and should, if possible, go home, but begs her for some word of love, and to say that " under all circumstances " she would be his.

During the night Poe had been taken care of at the hotel by a Mr. MacFarlane, a friend of the Whitmans. With considerable sense of the importance of the great poet whom he had in his care, MacFarlane took the opportunity, and led Poe around next morning, still half mad, to the establishment of Masury & Hartshorn where a daguerreotype was taken of him, probably at the very hour when he looked the worst that he ever looked in his life.[849] Mrs. Whitman, justly enough, labeled this the *Ultima Thule* portrait, as it showed Poe immediately after being snatched back from the ultimate world's end of horror.

After thus helplessly having had the lineaments of his despair preserved for future generations by a solicitous fool, Poe now called at the Whitman house on Benefit Street —

> . . . in a state of wild and delirious excitement calling upon me to save him from some terrible impending doom. The tones of his voice were appalling and rang through the house. Never have I heard anything so awful, awful even to sublimity.

Mrs. Whitman was afraid to see him. Evidently the reports of his appearance were alarming; on the other hand she was afraid of the consequences of a refusal. Her mother, who was opposed to the marriage, advised her to grant the distracted man an interview, — " moved by his suffering she urged me to soothe him by promising all that he might require of me." Mrs. Whitman's mother then endeavored to calm him for two hours while Helen, upstairs, was summoning courage to go down. Finally, in her usual dramatic manner, she entered. Of the dream which now burst upon the half crazed vision of Israfel we have an account:

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[849] Reproduced, page 779.

> As she came flitting into the room and gave you her small, nervous hand, you saw a slight figure, a pale, eager face of fine spiritual expression and irregular features, the dreamy look of deep-set eyes that gazed over and beyond, but never at you. Her movements were very rapid, and she seemed to flutter like a bird, so that her friends asserted that she was always in the process of transformation either to or from the condition of a lapwing.[850]

It is perfectly plain that Poe regarded the comfort of the love of some woman as necessary to his salvation. He hailed Helen as if she had been an angel sent to save him from damnation, and clung to her dress so frantically that a piece of the floating muslin drapery was torn away. Mrs. Whitman's mother, as a calm common-sense soul, had some hot coffee brought to him. After a little while the older woman sent for a friend, Dr. A. H. Okie, who advised Poe's removal for rest to the house of a friend, W. J. Pabodie, " where he was most kindly cared for."

There were several interviews with Helen at the Athenæum, where Mrs. Whitman asked Poe if he had seen a poem called *Ulalume* that had appeared in *Colton's American Review* for

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[850] Description by Miss Sarah S. Jacobs, Helen's friend. Quoted *Poe's Helen,* Ticknor, page 5.

[851] The following facts of the events of the last few days in Providence are not " reconstructions," but come largely from a letter written by " Sarah H. Whitman " to her friend, Mrs. Mary E. Hewitt, on October 4, 1850, eight pages of fine script, detailing with great care the exact order of events, her own emotions, what occurred, who was present, etc., etc., at the time the engagement to Poe was broken. The author does not have the right to quote from the letter. New light has been cast on the Poe-Whitman affair by the following:

" The Yale University Press has published in pamphlet form a group of *New Letters about Poe,* reprinted from the *Yale Review* for July, 1925. The letters deal with the romance of Edgar Allan Poe and Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, and their broken engagement. The pamphlet is edited by Stanley J. Williams."

December, 1847, a copy of which was then in the building. Poe then acknowledged to her that he was the author, and, as they bent over the verses, he read them to her and signed them. The magazine is still preserved at the Athenæum in Providence. In the same building, Mrs. Whitman gave her conditional consent to marry Poe, and at the same time extorted from him a sacred promise to let stimulants absolutely alone. It was the proviso upon which her own promise rested — and a loophole — a barn door of escape:

Poe left Providence on the 14th of November, and wrote back to Helen:

> . . . It is five o'clock and the boat is just being made fast at the wharf. I shall start on the train that leaves New York at 7 for Fordham. I write this to show you that I have not *dared* to break my promise to you. And now, dearest Helen, be true to me.

Of the parting that morning at Providence, and of the events of the day which followed, Mrs. Whitman has left an account which explains much of what afterward occurred. Poe had left with Helen's promise to marry him, given as we have seen on the advice of her mother, who evidently regarded it as merely a soothing formula to dismiss the half mad suitor. A great deal of gossip was of course started by Poe's peculiar actions, and the sight of the pair wandering about together. Neighbors no doubt "called." Two or three hours after Poe left, the Whitmans were informed by "kind friends" of the whole Ellet-Lummis-Osgood affair, and of Poe's habits. Mrs. Whitman's mother was driven wild. Helen, it seems, had become more interested in the romantic Virginia poet than the New England relatives had thought possible. She spent, consequently, a very miserable day — her relatives beseeched and argued — property was involved.

Walking in her garden that night, Mrs. Whitman looked up and beheld Arcturus, a star beloved by Poe who had pointed it out to her. "During the painful scenes which followed, which I would if possible banish forever from my remembrance, I chanced to look toward the western horizon and saw there Arcturus shining resplendently through an opening in the clouds, while of all the neighboring constellations, I could see only Orpheus, in the head of the serpent, still glimmering near with a pale and sickly luster." Having in mind the serpent of gossip which was threatening her lover's star, Mrs. Whitman retired to her chamber and in "prophetic exaltation" wrote

ARCTURUS

(*Written in October*)

'Our star looks through the storm.'

Star of resplendent front! thy glorious eye
Shines on me still from out yon clouded sky, —
Shines on me through the horrors of a night
More drear than ever fell o'er day so bright, —
Shines till the envious Serpent slinks away,
And pales and trembles at thy steadfast ray.
Hast thou not stooped from heaven, fair star! to be
So near me in this hour of agony? —
So near, — so bright, — so glorious, that I seem
To lie entranced as in some wondrous dream, —
All earthly joys forgot, — all earthly fear,
Purged in the light of thy resplendent sphere:
Kindling within my soul a pure desire
To blend with thine its incandescent fire, —
To lose my very life in thine, and be
Soul of thy soul through all eternity.[852]

About the same time that Mrs. Whitman was looking allegorically upon Arcturus, Poe was drawing into Fordham on the little train to be met by "Muddie," no doubt in tears, and trembling over the terrible change for the worse visible in the face of her darling. *Arcturus* was sent to Poe soon afterward.

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[852] Poe on receipt of these lines makes a reply that throws considerable light on his *own* methods of composition: "Your lines *To Arcturus* are truly beautiful. I would retain the Virgilian words — omitting the translation. The first note leave out. — 61 Cygni has been proved nearer than Arcturus and Alpha Lyrae is presumably so — Bessel, also, has shown 6 other stars to be nearer than the brighter one(s) + of this hemisphere — There is obvious tautology in 'pale candescent.' To be candescent is to become *white* with heat. Why not read — 'To blend with thine its incandescent fire?' . . ." Mrs Whitman made some of the changes, as the poem as printed here shows. Note — "Written in October" is romance to make the poem fall into Poe's "most immemorial year."

In the week that followed, Poe, in a half delirious condition — Mrs. Clemm says he was " hardly recognizable," — continued in the fitful fever of his conflict between Annie and Helen. He wrote to both Annie and to Helen: to Annie, the account of his attempt to commit suicide; and to Helen a defense against the accusations of various kinds. In the last letter, the persecutions of Mrs. Ellet, which had hastened the death of Virginia, disclose the agony of a sensitive and quixotically constituted man under the torture of relentless gossips. Mrs. Ellet's part in the whole affair over her own letters, the threatened duel, and poor little Fanny Osgood's " honor " — she was now gasping out life in Albany, — stands out clearly as a fine piece of feminine deviltry. All this was leading up to a conviction of persecution on the part of the nervously shipwrecked man at Fordham, nursed by " Muddie," between periods of writing frantic appeals to Annie and her sister, love letters and epistles of defense to Helen, and a desperate appeal to Edward Valentine, his foster-mother's cousin, who had loved him as a little boy. This last was a request dated November 20, 1848, for $200 to start the *Stylus*.[853]

> If for the sake of 'auld lang syne' you will advance me the sum needed, there are no words which can express my gratitude.

It was to the same cheerful gentleman, now a minister, who had once felt the child's arms tighten about him in terror, thirty-four years before, as they passed a graveyard, riding upon the same horse.

Annie did not reply. Mrs. Richardson had also been illuminated by the same " kind friends," and was naturally alarmed. In a letter to Annie's sister, Sarah, Poe says, " Her silence fills my whole soul with terror."

To Annie

Indeed, indeed, Annie, there is *nothing* in this world worth living for except love — love *not* such as I once thought I felt for Mrs. Osgood but such as burns in my very soul for *you* — so pure — so unworldly

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[853] At the same time Poe wrote a letter to Miss Susan Archer Tally (Mrs. Weiss), to Richmond, asking her as a friend to use her influence with Valentine. Miss Talley replied in a formal note promising to do what she could.

— a love which would make all sacrifices for your sake. . . . Could I have accomplished what I wish, no sacrifice would have seemed to me too great, I felt so burning, so intensely passionate a longing to show you that I loved you. Write to me — . I am resolved to *get rich* — to triumph — for your sweet sake, Kiss dear Sarah for me . . . we talk so much of her. . . . Remember me to *all* — to your father and mother and dear little Caddy, and Mr. R(ichmond) and Mrs. C. . . . — And now good-bye, my own dear sister Annie. . . .

To Mrs. Whitman

22nd of November, 1848

I wrote you yesterday, sweet Helen, but through fear of being too late for the mail omitted some things I wished to say. I fear, too, that my letter must have seemed cold — perhaps even harsh or selfish — for I spoke nearly altogether of my own griefs. Pardon me, my Helen, if not for the love I bear you, at least for the sorrows I have endured — more I believe than have often fallen to the lot of man. How much have they been aggravated by my consciousness that, in too many instances, they have risen from my own culpable weakness or childish folly! My sole hope now is in you, Helen. As you are true to me or fail me, so do I live or die. . . .

Was I right, dearest Helen, in my first impression of you? — you know I have implicit faith in first impressions — was I right in the impression that you are ambitious? If so, and if you will have faith in me, I can and will satisfy your wildest desires. It would be a glorious triumph, Helen, for us — for you and me.

I dare not trust my scheme to a letter — nor indeed have I time to hint at them here. When I see you I will explain all — as far, as I dare explain all my hopes even to you.

Would it not be 'glorious,' darling, to establish, in America, the sole unquestionable aristocracy — that of intellect — to secure its supremacy — to lead and to control it? All this I can do, Helen, and will — if you bid me — and aid me.

To Annie (*November* 16, 1848).

Two days after returning from Providence with Mrs. Whitman's promise of marriage

. . . I am so *ill* — so terribly hopelessly *ill* in body and mind, that I *cannot* live, unless I can feel your sweet, gentle loving hand pressed upon my forehead — oh, my *pure, virtuous, generous, beautiful sister*

Annie! Is it not *possible* for you to come — if only for one little week? Until I subdue this fearful agitation, which if continued, will either destroy my life or drive me hopelessly mad. . . .

During all this time, Poe existed on the proceeds of his recent lectures. The *Stylus,* of course, was to make him rich (for Annie), and to enable him to reign as the arbiter of American letters with Helen by his side. To what confusion the death of Virginia had released him, is apparent.

In the meantime, relatives were using their persuasive powers in Providence to break off the match there. Mrs. Whitman reserved her decision. On December 12, or thereabouts, Poe again visited Helen, when matters went so far as to cause Poe to write a note to a minister, Dr. Crooker, asking him to have the bans of the marriage published on " Sunday and Monday " (following). Dr. Crooker was to perform the ceremony when the day had been decided upon. The relatives had failed to break off the engagement, but knowing Poe's failings, they insisted that an arrangement should be made to protect the family estate.

On December 15, a marriage contract was drawn up between Poe and Mrs. Whitman at Providence, in which Mrs. Whitman's estate, consisting of about $8300 worth of bank notes and mortgages, was transferred to Mrs. Power, " our said mother for her own use." Poe, Anna Power, Sarah Helen Whitman, and her sister, Susan Anna Power, signed this in the presence of Henry Martin and William J. Pabodie, as witnesses. As Poe had stayed at the house of Pabodie, who was said to be in love, and long a suitor of Mrs. Whitman's (sic), much can be read between the lines.

Poe returned for a short stay at Fordham, informing Mrs. Clemm of what had taken place, and doubtless discussing with her the preparation of the cottage for the new bride. Mrs. Clemm was patient but saddened. The opposition of Mrs. Power to her daughter's marriage, and the transfer of the property that she insisted upon, had angered Poe and alarmed Mrs. Clemm, who was now about to be presented with a penniless daughter-in-law by no means used to the poverty in which Virginia had lived and died. Poe wrote to Helen saying *his* mother would return good for evil — and to expect him in Providence, Wednesday the twentieth. On that date, he left New York to go to Providence to deliver a lecture before the Franklin Lyceum. At the New York station he met Mrs. Hewitt, all agog over the marriage reports, who said to him, — " Mr. Poe, are you going to Providence to be married? " " I am going," replied he, " to deliver a lecture on Poetry " — and then added after a little hesitation — " that marriage may never take place."

The lecture was delivered successfully before an audience of about 1800 enthusiastic auditors. The next morning, Poe wrote to Annie! — " I hope that I distinguished myself at the lecture — I *tried* to do so, for your sake. . . . Give my dearest love to all — "

The lecture had been on Wednesday, November 20, 1848; the note to Annie is dated Thursday. It was probably upon this same day that he obtained Mrs. Whitman's final consent to marry him on the following Monday. On Friday the twenty-second, a further consent to the release of the property of Mrs. Whitman was signed by Poe in the presence of Pabodie, to whom Poe, next day, Saturday, gave the note to the minister to publish the bans. Pabodie did not deliver it. At the same time, Poe wrote a letter to Mrs. Clemm:

> MY OWN DEAR MOTHER — We shall be married on Monday, and will be at Fordham on Tuesday, in the first train.

This was on Saturday, December 23, and Poe expected Dr. Crooker to publish the bans on the morrow at church.

On the morning of the same day (Saturday), he and Mrs. Whitman took a drive together. Helen then returned to the house to pack, and met Poe later in the afternoon at a circulating library. Here a letter was handed to Mrs. Whitman cautioning her against the marriage, and informing her of Poe's interest in Mrs. Richmond, which had created a scandal at Lowell. Mrs. Whitman also learned, possibly through Pabodie, that the same morning, at the bar of the *Earl House*, Poe had been seen drinking wine with some gay young friends there at the bar. This convinced her that her influence would be futile in reforming him.[842]

On the way home, Helen informed Poe of what she had heard, and while he was still present, countermanded the publication of the bans. Poe vehemently denied that he had been drinking, and there was no evidence whatever in his manner that he had been doing so, so Mrs. Whitman says. She listened to his remonstrances and denials with despair, she adds, yet not unsolaced by the sense of relief that his infringement of his promise had released her from her own. It was plain to her now that Poe's plea to save him had imposed upon her a responsibility, and a mission which, in spite of all, would be in vain. The incident at the *Earl House* bar showed her that her marriage with him could bring no benefits to either, and nothing but misery on them both.[842] There can be no doubt that, as far as human wisdom can see, Mrs. Whitman was eminently correct in her forebodings.

Poe withdrew, and Mrs. Whitman informed her mother of what had occurred. That lady, anxious to have Poe out of town, sent for him in the late afternoon to put a final quietus upon the affair, and to return some papers to him. Pabodie accompanied Poe to the house where Mrs. Whitman and her mother, Mrs. Power, received the gentlemen in the same parlor where the courtship had gone on. Helen was worn out by argument and appeal, nearly hysterical, and about to faint.

With trembling hands she returned to Poe certain letters and papers, and overcome by her emotions fell back on a couch pressing the anæsthetic kerchief to her face. Poe came over beside her and begged her to say that it was not to be a final interview. Mrs. Power here interposed to save her daughter by mentioning the hour of the departure of the next train for New York, and hoping fervently that Mr. Poe would not miss it. At this, Poe fell upon his knees, begging Helen to reconsider. Finally she murmured, "What can I say?"

"Say that you love me, Helen!" he begged. Pressing closer he heard the last words that she ever spoke to him, "I love you" — whispered in accents of despair through a handkerchief soaked in ether.

Mr. Pabodie accompanied Mr. Poe to the station.

CHAPTER XXVI

Lenore and the Edge of the World

MRS. CLEMM, poor soul, who had no doubt been wondering what her status would be in the household with the new wife, was greatly relieved when the train pulled into Fordham with Eddie — and no bride. Poe's reactions to the whole affair were curious. He was one of those personalities in whom pride and conscience were synonymous. His pride had been wounded, and he never forgave that. He hoped to pass the whole matter off quietly, by giving out that the engagement had been postponed. In this report he desired Mrs. Whitman to join.

The emotional tempest which he had just passed through had worn itself out, and, as it were, cleared the atmosphere. From the total of the correspondence which immediately followed, one gathers a distinct feeling of relief, and a sense of settling down to the real business of his life, writing. The last Christmas was spent with "Muddie" at Fordham, and, along with a feeling of relief and a deceptive vigor, there was a temporary rise in the tide of well-being, even a sense of returning health as the New Year's bells rang for 1849.

What the world thought of the engagement with Helen Whitman is caught in the lines of a letter that Horace Greeley wrote to Griswold in January — evidently he had not yet learned that the engagement was broken.

> Do you know Sarah Helen Whitman? Of course, you have heard it rumored that she is to marry Poe. Well, she has seemed to me a good girl, and — you know what Poe is. Now I know a widow of doubtful age will marry almost any sort of a white man, but this seems to me a terrible conjunction. Has Mrs. Whitman no friend within your knowledge that could faithfully explain Poe to her? I never attempted this sort of thing but once, and the net product was two enemies and the hastening of the marriage; but I do think she must be deceived. Mrs. Osgood must know her. . . .[854]

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[854] *Griswold's Correspondence,* page 249. Printed by Harrison, *Biography,* page 290.

About the same time, Poe was writing to Annie, saying that "a great burden is taken off my heart by my rupture with Mrs. W., for I have fully made up my mind to break the engagement." He was not able to maintain this pose, however, as the reports of the doings in Providence were soon flying about, with the usual tendency of the gossips' snowball to grow into an avalanche, when once set rolling. Towards the end of January, Poe again wrote to Annie enclosing, to her, a letter to Mrs. Whitman to be read first by Annie, then to be sealed, and mailed to Mrs. Whitman. This was to clear himself with Annie, who had heard the gossip about the last scenes at Providence, and, at the same time, to assure Mrs. Whitman that he was not responsible for the reports going about, "No amount of provocation shall enduce me to speak ill of you (Helen) even in my own defense." [855]

The truth is, Poe was heartily sick of it all. He was still determined to do something to alleviate his poverty, which left him no chance to rest, but, in the same letter to Annie, in which he enclosed Mrs. Whitman's, he boils over and remarks:

> . . . Of one thing rest assured, from this day forth, I shun the pestilential society of literary women. They are a heartless, unnatural venomous, dishonorable set, with no guiding principle but inordinate self-esteem. Mrs. Osgood is the only exception I know. . . .[856]

It was a natural, although certainly, under the circumstances of the letter and its enclosure, not a delicate thing to say.

About the room in the cottage of Fordham, where he now began once more to throw himself into writing almost as a feverish refuge, an immense web of gossip began to gather. It had, as a matter of fact, very little to do with what has made him famous. The curious student may still follow its scandalous, and ludicrous, mystic mazes through reams of correspondence, and learn nothing but the nature of the petty characters of those who surrounded Poe. It is now fairly plain what happened.[857]

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[855] The statements made in this text about the aftermath of the Whitman affair will be found verified in the various letters to Mrs. Richmond (Annie) about this time, and the letter to Mrs. Whitman mentioned. Many of these letters are reprinted in full by Prof. Woodberry and Harrison. See also *The "Annie" Letters,* published by Ingram, the source of most of this correspondence.

[856] This statement, together with the publication of *The "Annie" Letters* by Ingram, is said to have caused Mrs. Whitman great chagrin later on.

All the realities of life lay, for Poe, in the realm of the imagination. It was only there that he could, in any way, integrate the world. He longed for a logical, and a complete, consistency never found in the realm of the physical, and the world which he constructed for himself was a refuge that suited the peculiarities of his nature. There can be no doubt that, whatever the cause, he was not capable of enduring, during his later years, the excitement of passion, while at the same time remaining sane.[858] Love, like everything else, could be perfect for him only imaginatively. Only in the imagination could he find an ideal satisfaction. Every woman whom he loved was exalted into the dream angel whom he could worship imaginatively, rather than physically enjoy. Virginia, for a while, had provided for him an ideal personality to so exalt. The physical implications, there, must have been reduced to the minimum, if present at all. As her dissolution approached, and after her death occurred, it became necessary to find other women upon whom to center the sensations which he exalted into the ideal love of his soul. Several ladies followed in quick succession. Mrs. Osgood, Mrs. Shew (and Mrs. Richmond and Mrs. Whitman simultaneously). The very fact that they were, in some cases, married helped to remove them from the physical realm. Poe's attitude toward each was the same, and in each case the ideal woman, the angel, emerged from his imagination. It was a mere accident who produced the effect. Someone who was near, kind, sympathetic, and comforting was all that was needed. About them all, he managed to throw the glamour of his psychic romance.

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[857] Ingram's well meant activities, as T. D. English said in a letter to Griswold, served to rake many things from the dust which had better have remained there. Prof. Woodberry also regrets the publication of much of the petty scandals of the letters.

[858] Joseph Wood Krutch in his *Edgar Allan Poe, A Study in Genius,* has gone so far as to claim that Poe was impotent. The reader who is interested should read Mr. Krutch's book. There is no attempt here to prove any particular theory about Poe's condition. Poe's letters to various women, from 1847 to 1849, prove that his attitude towards them was a peculiar one. This author does not know whether Poe was impotent or not, but is quite sure that, in 1848 and 1849, Poe was nervously disorganized and abnormal.

All this was hard, impossible, at the time, to understand. Mrs. Shew and Mrs. Richmond seem to have grasped the situation. Mrs. Whitman did so afterward. It was " spiritual love "; she enthroned him as her ideal. Unfortunately for Poe, such a futile and hopeless equipment for the realities of physical life involved him with the world, which could not grasp his motives, in a conflict, and a maze of difficulties that helped to hound him to death.

Husbands, who found " Israfel " rhapsodizing in their wives' parlors, could not understand that the gentleman, the dangerously romantic poet, who seemed to be talking to Fanny, or Louise, or Annie, as the case might be, was in reality merely addressing the accidental embodiment which " Lenore," or " Helen," or " Ligeia," or " Annabel Lee " had, at that particular date, assumed. Other interests of a more mundane nature were naturally inferred. Trouble, swift, sure, and devastating, occurred. And " Israfel " was once more left alone.

To women, it was all enormously intriguing. All the passion of the man, all of the life instinct lived and burned in his conversation and letters. They had never dreamed of such talk from a man. The banal " pass the coffee," of James or Henry, was suddenly, by Poe's lips, transformed, exalted into the accents of archangels upon the tongue of man. It is easy to discount, or laugh at this now, but it was quite different, quite another thing, to sit listening to the news from Aidenn upon an antimacassar with Edgar Allan Poe.

If this aspect of the man at first overwhelmed, and attracted women, his boundless need, and pathetic pleas for sympathy, and utter spiritual possession of the object of his admiration knew no bounds. As it was impossible to be an angel in paradise, " to dwell alone in a world of moan," the " Helen " or " Annie," who had been enticed there, always withdrew, sometimes regretfully and tactfully, sometimes indignantly — but always, as was perfectly natural and feminine, disappointed. In the meantime, during the celestial episode, a great deal of mundane talk had been going on.

Such a man as Poe was bound to arouse a stir in feminine circles. There is an almost psychic sense with women that leads them, instinctively, to feel when the normal attitude of the male to the female is altered, or lacking. With Poe it was present; it aroused them, and yet, — it was elusive, strange, something new. They pursued him and persevered. They wanted to find him out. To the spectator males, there was only one, the universal, obvious explanation.

For Poe, the man, it was a fatal, and a disastrous predicament. It involved a nature, endowed with the mad pride of Lucifer, in squabbles and predicaments so ludicrous, and petty, as to produce in him a spiritual nausea. All the flashing glades of heaven, the bowers of paradise, wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers, were invaded by gesticulating old women shouting about real estate, or Mr. Lummises with derringers in their coat-tails. Imaginatively, the bowers of love were removed farther and farther away, out of space, out of time. They became Valleys of Many Colored Grass, or the heavily curtained chamber of Rowena, yet all would not do. Mrs. Elizabeth Frieze Ellet penetrated — discovered even the lone isles in the sea — and the dreams, the lovely, supernal visions, vanished in the sulphur smoke of gossip, accusations of seduction, or the horrible whiskered face of an English, glimmering through an alcoholic mist over pistols on the table. No, Poe would have to apologize, cringe, make a cur of himself — or next morning the *New York Mirror* would tell why — and it did.

But, then again, there was something else — had he not written, twenty years before in *Tamerlane*, dreaming of Elmira? — "Tamerlane," the great "Tamerlane," was dying, thinking of why love had been lost and snatched from him — just as "Israfel," the great "Israfel," was dying now — and still murmuring:

Young Love's first lesson is the heart
For mid that sunshine and those smiles,
When from our little cares apart,
And laughing at her girlish wiles,
I'd throw me on her throbbing breast
And pour my spirit out in tears,
There was no need to speak the rest,
No need to quiet any fears,
Of her — who asked no reason why,
But turned on me her quiet eye.

And yet — and yet

> How was it that ambition crept
> Unseen, amid the revels there,
> Till growing bold, he laugh'd and leapt
> In the tangles of Love's brilliant hair.[859]

No, he could stand them no longer; the terrible gossips in hoopskirts, the suspicious husbands, the little gad-fly magazines, hounding him, printing coarse parodies of the immortal dreams, beloved faces vanishing, always vanishing. And was he not sick with long months of headache,[860] haunted by terrific visions, poor as Lazarus, a laughing-stock, and yet great? He knew it, — capable of putting into words, at lucky intervals, dreams that would haunt eternity, music that, with a melancholy magic, covers the tragedy of humanity with a pall of stars. He only, of all the millions of beings who have spoken English, caught up in the meshes of language the cosmic sorrow of the ocean while, from the sounding beaches, the angels abducted his "Annabel Lee." This was no small thing. No one had done it before, and no one will ever do it again in just his way.

But it was all getting quite unbearable now, in 1849, — something must be done. Even before Helen Whitman withdrew, he wrote:

> . . . for the terrible agony which I have so lately endured — an agony known only to my God and to myself — seems to have passed my soul through fire and purified it from all that is weak. Henceforward I am strong: — this, those who love me shall see — as well as those who have so untiringly endeavored to ruin me. It needed only some such trials as I have undergone to make me what I was born to be, by making me conscious of my strength.[861]

What was his strength? In the Winter of 1849, the balked and nervously ruined man who had again retreated to the cottage at Fordham, pursued by the hissing and laughter of the world, seems compounded of weakness. His strength was his imagination.

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[859] Lines from *Tamerlane* published in John Neal's *Yankee* in 1829. The last four lines refer specifically to the dying "Tamerlane."

[860] Poe specifically complains to Annie of months of headache.

[861] Poe to Mrs. Whitman.

The very elements that were fast making his physical existence impossible had been so mixed in him that all the passion, and love, the tenderness that yearned over the happy fireside of Annie, and wished to be identified with it, overflowed through his pen, and became embodied in the only world he could control, and order as he desired, the sphere of imaginative literature. All else about him dissolved, withdrew, vanished away into time, until the objective world itself, its concrete things, and its three-dimensioned denizens seemed more dreamlike, less palpably real than his dream within a dream.

And they have remained so to the generations that followed. The era, the peculiar mid-Nineteenth Century in which he lived and moved, has become a lost country to those who have followed. It is more remote and peculiar than Siam. As one looks at its queer costumes, its strange rococo architecture, its faiths, prejudices, hopes, and ambitions, its now meaningless conventions that bounded its motives, — but above all, as one attempts to approach it through its popular literature, — it seems like a strange ocean of mist in which, through vaguely glimpsed streets in dreamfully grotesque towns, there move, for forgotten reasons, the ghosts of costumes. Out of this vaguely agitated, and greyly-twinkling land, like a steeple above a city fog, beneath which the noise of unseen traffic rolls on, a few objects stand forth, outlined and clearly defined. One of these is the imaginative prose and poetry of Edgar Allan Poe.

The time will perhaps come when it will be found worth while to penetrate down into the mist of " middle America," and to examine more fully the edifice upon which the pinnacles rest. The spirits who once lived there, moved in the boundaries and the conventions of their time. The Athens of Plato, the Florence of Dante, the Paris of Villon, and the London of Dr. Johnson are comparatively plain. We are at great pains to understand them, while the cities of our grandfathers glimmer mysteriously as Atlantis, despised and discounted, within the yellow borders of old prints.

Yet there was a great stir there. Something important, and significant was going on. All the potentialities of the past were being released. Out of the thirteen republics — the words have almost been forgotten — that lined the Atlantic seaboard, arose a giant that has laid his hand heavily upon the home of man. The time will come when it will not be thought beneath the dignity of scholars both to profess, and really to know.

The paragraph about the literary women with whom he would have no more to do, penned irritably in the letter to Annie, was no mere caprice. It was the result of an experience so painful, so real a reality, that it penetrated even the dream world of Poe. To traffic any longer with such witches, was to barter away his soul. From now on, he would devote himself to writing! This time, the *Stylus* would become a fact! From January to June of 1849, the preparations for the great campaign went on. Helen would not come to sit beside him on the throne which he would occupy. Be it so then, he would reign there alone. The last, the briefest, but one of the most important of his creative periods began. Out of it came the finished *Bells,* and the great ballad of *Annabel Lee.*

Nor is the half-mad, the apparently insane ambition to be despised. Humbleness in the great, in the " sports " of intellect, is, at best, but a lubricant upon the contemporary wheels that manufacture fame, a wise, though not a necessary stock in trade. Genius knows itself the rose that justifies its tree; a blossom upon the fruitless bushes of ambition. Only madmen, according to grocers' standards, retire to caverns to be fed by ravens; it is insane to pit fishermen and tent-makers against proconsuls and Cæsars; masons can see no monumental material in paper, yet the dreams of poets outlast the golden countenances of kings. Were it not for the magnificent eccentrics, society, like a community of insects, would crystallize forever in the ignoble efficiency of caste.

And all of these mad dreamers, the glorious company of egoists who fear not the god of their neighbors, always fail. Columbus sails for Cathay, and only finds another world; Napoleon fails to found a dynasty. Shelley leaves God alone with Oxford; Coleridge was unable to finish *Christabel* or *Kubla Khan.* Yet the same line which marks the extremity of such failures becomes the boundary of political empires, and of literary kingdoms.

Poe had also greatly failed. His mad dream of becoming the arbiter of American letters was never, could not, in the nature of things, have been attained. He only succeeded in achieving a niche in the literature of the English language. Whether an humble heart is consonant with such an eventuality, may well be doubted. Poe was very proud. And, on the whole, there was distinctly something to be proud of. It was doing fairly well for the poor orphan boy, the lonely clerk who had pored over the columns of English reviews, in the dim book loft of *Ellis & Allan* in the provincial town of Richmond, only twenty years before. He had triumphed over enormous handicaps.

Poe has been accused of being unreliable, flighty, and inconsistent. From the standpoint of a Burton or a Graham, this was true. But in one thing he had been supremely faithful, driving steadily through poverty, disease, death, frustration, and the despair of his weaknesses — he had been faithful to his literary work:

> How I labored — how I toiled — How I wrote! Ye Gods, did I *not* write? I knew not the word 'ease.' By day I adhered to my desk, and at night, a pale student, I consumed the midnight oil. You should have seen me — you *should*. I leaned to the right. I leaned to the left. I sat forward. I sat backward. I sat upon end. I sat *tête baisée,* bowing my head close to the alabaster page. And, through good report and through ill report, I — *wrote*. Through sunshine and through moonshine, I — *wrote*. *What* I wrote it is unnecessary to say. The *style!* — that was the thing. . . .[862]

The letters which Poe sent to Annie from Fordham in the early months of 1849 plainly show that he had now made up his mind to devote himself to literature with the objects of enhancing his fame, and gaining enough money to raise him out of poverty, and put him in the way of starting the *Stylus*. Women, love, and the troubles these brought upon him, he fondly believed he had, after his recent terrible experience, dropped out of his life. In the stanzas *For Annie,* which he addressed to Mrs. Richmond about this time, occur some significant lines:

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[862] Last paragraphs of Poe's *Literary Life of Thingum Bob, Esq.*

Thank Heaven! the crisis —
  The danger — is past,
And the lingering illness
  Is over at last, —
And the fever called 'Living'
  Is conquered at last. . . .

And oh! of all tortures,
  That torture the worst!
Has abated — the terrible
  Torture of thirst
For the napthaline river
  Of Passion accurst: —
I have drank of a water
  That quenches all thirst. . . .

And about the end of January he writes:

. . . I am so busy, now, and feel so full of energy. Engagements to write are pouring in upon me every day. I had two proposals within the last week from Boston. I sent yesterday an article to the *Am. Review,* about *Critics and Criticism.* Not long ago I sent one to the *Metropolitan* called *Landor's Cottage* it has something about 'Annie' in it, and will appear, I suppose in the March number. To the *S. L. Messenger* I have sent fifty pages of *Marginalia,* five pages to appear each month of the current year. I have also made permanent engagements with another magazine, called *The gentlemen's.* So you see that I have only to keep up my spirits to get out of all my pecuniary troubles. The least price I get is $5 per '*Graham* page,' and I can easily average 1½ per day — that is $7½. As soon as 'returns' come in I shall be out of difficulty.[863]

By the middle of February, he evidently felt he was on his feet again. Several allusions to a sense of returning health belong to this period, and, on February 14, we find him resuming, after a long interval, his correspondence with F. W. Thomas, who had left Government employ in Washington, and was, at that time, engaged in editing the *Louisville* (Kentucky) *Chronicle.*

. . . Right glad am I to find you once more in a true position — 'in the field of letters.' Depend upon it after all, Thomas, literature is the most noble of professions. In fact, it is about the only one fit for a man. For

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[863] Poe to "Annie."

> my own part there is no seducing me from the path. I shall be a litterateur at least, all my life; nor would I abandon the hopes which still lead me on for all the gold in California. Talking of gold and temptations at present held out to 'poor-devil authors' did it ever strike you that all that is really valuable to a man of letters — to a poet in especial — is absolutely unpurchasable? Love, fame, the dominion of intellect, the consciousness of power, the thrilling sense of beauty, the free air of Heaven, exercise of body and mind, with the physical and moral health which result — these and such as these are really all that a poet cares for: — then answer me this — *why* should he go to California? . . .[864]

The excitement of the gold rush was evidently a good deal on Poe's mind. As we have seen, he felt that his own richest vein of ore lay within. It is almost certain that the poem, *Eldorado,* dates from about this time. The theme was also treated by him in prose. On March 8, Poe wrote to Duyckinck enclosing "the Von Kempelen Article," which he hoped his literary agent could place for him. He had, he said, prepared the story to be published as a hoax in Boston in the *Flag of Our Union,* but he thought it would be "thrown away" in that publication.

The story purported to relate the arrest, in Bremen, of a certain American chemist, Von Kempelen, suspected of counterfeiting. A chest of gold was found in his room, which turned out to be the result of alchemy — "All that yet can fairly be said to be known is, that "Pure gold can be made at will, and very readily from lead in connection with certain other substances, in kind and proportions, unknown."[865] It was of this story that Poe wrote to Duyckinck.

> My sincere opinion is that nine persons out of ten (even among the best-informed) will believe the quiz (provided the design does not leak out before publication) and that this, acting as a sudden although, of 'course, a very temporary, check to the gold fever, it will create a *stir* to some purpose.[866]

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[864] Poe to Thomas, February 14, 1849. This is Poe's ideal of literary life. He, of course, took no such physical care of himself. It was what he had been advised to do. See notes by Kennedy, White, Thomas.

[865] From the text, the central "fact" of the story.

[866] Poe to Duyckinck, March 8, 1849.

In a letter to Eveleth, at the end of February, occurs the first reference to Poe's contemplated move to Richmond,[867] "I mean to start for Richmond on the 10th (of) March." Poe and Mrs. Clemm had intended to go to Lowell to be near the Richmonds, but a serious cloud had overshadowed the poet's intentions to be near Annie and her family. Mrs. Locke, Mrs. Osgood's sister-in-law, had assumed the rôle of Mrs. Ellet. A great many of the doings at Providence were detailed to Mr. and Mrs. Richmond, together with the history of Poe's relations with the Osgoods.[868] Mr. Richmond and his wife seem to have acted with a great deal of judgment and cool-headedness in the matter. Although they were alarmed, they still continued to cherish a warm, and even an affectionate regard for Poe.

The whole affair is now remote and obscure. As nearly as can be made out, Poe, on his lecture at Lowell, had gone there largely through the influence of Mrs. Locke, who was delighted to play the rôle of patroness which she had really played to some purpose just after Virginia's death. Poe, it seems, after meeting Mrs. Richmond, paid very little attention to Mrs. Locke, even staying at the Richmonds' in preference to the other lady's house. Mrs. Locke was in communication with Helen Whitman, who said that "She (Mrs. Locke) conceived herself to have been deeply wronged. . . . I saw that she was too much under the influence of pride to exercise a calm judgment in the matter." Mrs. Locke was doubly indignant at having to watch Poe go through all the same motions with Annie which had marked his affair with Mrs. Osgood, who was then dying of consumption. Mrs. Locke, therefore, determined to produce, if possible, an end to the affair with Annie similar to that of Mrs. Osgood's. She was partially successful in a rôle which the long aftermath of her acrimonious and tittle-tattling correspondence discloses her to have been well fitted for. Mrs. Richmond was alarmed, although she, who undoubtedly understood Poe, refused to misconstrue his attentions to her.

A large part of the correspondence between Poe and Mrs.

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[867] Poe to Eveleth, February 29, 1849.

[868] Partly an inference, but a certain one. Mrs. Locke was Mrs. Osgood's sister-in-law. The rest is inherent in the text of letters from Poe to "Annie."

Richmond, during the early months of 1849, is concerned with the charges, countercharges, and rebuttals that Mrs. Locke's activities involved.[869] Both the letters of Annie and Sarah to Poe, and especially to Mrs. Clemm, now took a tone which made it plain to Mrs. Clemm, at least, that a residence in the neighborhood of the Richmonds, or any further visits there on Poe's part, would be decidedly unwelcome.[870]

Mrs. Clemm called Poe's attention to this, and it would seem that it was her attitude which induced him to give up the scheme. It is probable, although it cannot be proved by letters, that it was at this time that Mrs. Clemm suggested to Poe his going to Richmond, with the possibility of looking up Elmira Royster (Mrs. Shelton) again. A great deal of conversation must have taken place between the two about their plans for a new place of residence, if the lease on the Fordham cottage were allowed to expire, as it was about to do.[871] For a time, Poe seemed to have felt it best that even the correspondence with Annie should cease. On February 19 he wrote to her:

> I cannot and *will* not have it on my conscience that I have interfered with the domestic happiness of the only being in the whole world, whom I have loved at the same time with truth and with purity . . . you have not *said* it to me, but I have been enabled to glean from what you *have* said, that Mr. Richmond has permitted himself (perhaps without knowing it) to be influenced against me by the malignant misrepresentations of Mr. and Mrs. (Locke). . . .

Poe's initial quarrel with the Lockes had arisen over Mrs. Locke's assertions about Mrs. Richmond, so Poe states to

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[869] The correspondence which is the source of the statements made in the text is plainly indicated. Specific references to the dates of letters is avoided here, as anyone particularly interested in this peculiar phase of Poe's love affairs will have to read the Whitman, "Annie," Griswold, Poe, Osgood, letters of this time, and after Poe's death, to glean the ramifications of this miserable affair. Margaret Fuller, and Mrs. Hewitt, and Mrs. Ellet are also concerned in the spider web. See also the Woodberry and Harrison biographies of Poe.

[870] "Sarah" was "Annie's" sister.

[871] In May, 1849, Mrs. Clemm writes Annie that the lease will be allowed to expire. A change of plan then occurred. Mrs. Susan Archer Weiss says that Mrs. Mackenzie had written, in the Summer of 1848, urging the Elmira affair upon Poe. This is doubtful. The cottage was leased in 1849 for another year by Poe, and Mrs. Clemm was living there when he died.

Annie. His decision not to come to Lowell evidently greatly relieved matters, for correspondence was resumed with the Richmonds, and also went on with the Lockes. Ten days after the letter quoted above, Poe writes Eveleth he is going to Richmond.

All seemed going well, when the usual tide of misfortune, that always overtook Poe at crucial times, now delivered a double blow. Most of the periodicals for which he had been so briskly writing, and upon which he depended for his livelihood, either suspended or defaulted payment, and he was simultaneously attacked by a relapse into ill-health attended by sinking spells, and an unaccountable depression. He was, indeed, in a process of physical dissolution. Even poor, patient " Muddie " now writes to Annie, " I thought he would die several times. God knows I wish we were both in our graves. It would I am sure, be far better." A little later, Poe writes to Annie that he is better, — but —

> . . . You know how cheerfully I wrote to you not long ago — about my prospects — hopes — how I anticipated being soon out of difficulty. Well! all seems to be frustrated — at least for the present. As usual, misfortunes never come single, and I have met one disappointment after another. The *Columbian Magazine,* in the first place, failed — then Post's *Union* (taking with it my principal dependence); then the *Whig Review* was forced to stop paying for contributions — then the *Democratic* — then (on account of his oppression and insolence) I was obliged to quarrel, finally, with ——; and then, to crown all, the '——— ———' (from which I anticipated so much and with which I had made a regular engagement for $10 a week throughout the year) has written a circular to correspondents, pleading poverty and declining to receive any more articles. More than this, the *S. L. Messenger* which owed me a good deal, cannot pay just yet, and altogether, I am reduced to Sartain and Graham both very precarious. No doubt, Annie, you attribute my 'gloom' to these events — but you would be wrong. It is not in the power of any mere *worldly* considerations, such as these, to depress me. . . . No, my sadness is *unaccountable,* and this makes me the more sad. I am full of dark forebodings. *Nothing* cheers or comforts me. My life seems wasted — the future looks a dreary blank: but I will struggle on and 'hope against hope.' . . . What do you think? I have received a letter from Mrs. Locke. She says she is about to publish a detailed account of *all* that occurred between us, under guise of romance, with fictitious names, etc., — that she will make me appear

noble, generous, etc., etc., —nothing bad — that she will 'do justice to my motives,' etc., etc. . . .[872]

Poe's illness was undoubtedly a relapse after the serious illness following the Whitman affair. His periods of relapse were now accentuated, and came upon him suddenly after any excitement or exertion. He had worn himself out in the period between December, 1848, and March, 1849, composing, sending off articles and poems to the magazines, to the newspapers, and to Griswold, and by conducting a feverish correspondence.

Every line in manuscript and correspondence was, of course, in those days carried on in long hand. Poe was too poor to afford, at anytime, an amanuensis, and he was pedantically meticulous about his manuscripts. The labor of composing, redrafting, and editing, and then making perfect fair-copies, with the added labor of writing long, and often beautifully composed letters, is almost impossible to exaggerate. Much of this, at a time of weakness and depression, was now found of no avail, by the failure of magazines, and some of the manuscripts were thrown back on his hands. *Landor's Cottage,* which, for Annie's sake, he had spent much labor upon, and that he was therefore doubly anxious to publish, had met the latter fate.

The records of his illnesses from 1847 on, show that his heart was giving out. Mrs. Shew, as we have seen, together with Dr. Francis, felt that he could not live long, even two years before. This condition, we can be morally certain, was the cause of that depression that he could not explain. In addition, the symptoms of a lesion of the brain, which were several times medically noted, now became more acute. He is described, about now, as having had periods of "brain faver" that point to some sort of cerebral inflammation and congestion, and he complains to Annie of a headache that lasted for months.

Poe's periods of collapse and depression had, hitherto, occurred at long intervals. From 1847 to 1849 the process is obviously accelerated, the recovery less complete, and the intervals of prostration greatly prolonged.

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[872] Poe to "Annie," March, 1849.

It is highly probable that, during the end of the stay at the cottage in Fordham, he again resorted to drugs for stimulation and surcease. There is no mention of alcohol, but a few months later, in June, 1849, immediately after leaving New York, Poe appeared to a friend in Philadelphia completely unmanned, shaking, and begging for laudanum.[873] The same drug had been procured by him in Providence in December, 1848, when he intended to commit suicide, so he was evidently familiar with it. The dose then taken, he said, acted as an emetic, but it was sufficient to have killed any normal person not inured to its effects. He had swallowed about an ounce. It was in such a debilitated condition that he continued to pour forth great poetry and distinguished prose.

The Winter and early Spring of 1849 were marked by the publication of *Mellonta Tauta* in *Godey's Lady's Book* for February. This had been written before *Eureka,* for Poe quoted from it in the introduction to the latter.

Mellonta Tauta, under the guise of being written on April Fool's Day, 2848, contains some of the most important of Poe's inferences about the future that are, in many instances, prophetic. The philosophy in it elaborates many of the points made in *Eureka,* and it is probable that it was meant for an introduction to the prose poem or, at least, as a companion piece. The author's satire on his own times, its social theories, fashions, and architecture is decidedly interesting.

Poe had also been contributing to the *Flag of Our Union,* an obscure Boston sheet, that had the sole merit of paying him promptly and fairly well. In it appeared the little understood allegory of *Hop-Frog,* the sonnet *To My Mother,* and *A Valentine,* written in 1846, and addressed to Mrs. Osgood — these during February and March. The *Southern Literary Messenger* published a review of Lowell's *Fable for Critics,* also in March. It is during the same period that we hear of the composition of *The Bells, Annabel Lee, For Annie, Lenore,* and, by inference, *El Dorado*. All of these belonged to the finest order of his works.

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[873] The friend was Sartain, see page 817.

With the correspondence in hand, it is not difficult to glance into the cottage at Fordham, and see what was going on. On February 8, Poe writes:

> . . . I have been so busy, 'Annie' ever since I returned from Providence — six weeks ago. I have not suffered a day to pass without writing from a page to three pages. Yesterday, I wrote five, and the day before a poem considerably longer than *The Raven*. I call it *The Bells*. How I wish 'Annie' could see it! . . . The five prose pages I finished yesterday are called — what do you think? — I am sure you will never guess — *Hop-Frog!*

About a month later we find him writing to Griswold (undated).

> I enclose perfect copies of the lines *For Annie* and *Annabel Lee*, in hopes that you may make room for them in your new edition. As regards *Lenore* (which you were kind enough to say you would insert) I would prefer the concluding stanza to run as here written. . . .[874]

Poverty now once more had him in its grip, but both he and Mrs. Clemm appear to have been relieved somewhat by the generosity of "Stella" (Mrs. S. A. Lewis), whose literary reputation Poe was furthering. His review of "Stella's" poem *The Child of the Sea*, in the September, 1848, *Southern Literary Messenger*, was undoubtedly colored by the relief which she had, even then, brought to his desperate necessities. Mrs. Clemm had become quite intimate with Mrs. Lewis, and Poe, who at first detested her, had become reconciled, and had even grown to like her. The friendship and correspondence with Mrs. Shew were also resumed about now, and she from time to time once more appeared at Fordham. On March 30, he writes:

> You see that I am not yet off to Richmond as I proposed. I have been detained by some very important and unexpected matters which I will explain when I see you. What is the reason you have not been out?[875]

All through the correspondence of the spring months of 1849 is to be found a running reference to the constantly deferred trip to Richmond. Along with this, as another biographer has noted, there is, in the Annie letters, what amounts to a chorus of, " I must get rich, get rich." [876] The postponement of the Richmond trip was, of course, due to poverty, and this Poe knew he could no longer cope with in his debilitated condition. To continue to exist, to provide a home for Mrs. Clemm, and to start the *Stylus,* a life of decent comfort freed from the fear of the wolf, was necessary. This was undoubtedly the controlling motive in the last year of Poe's life, and the key to his contemplated trip to Richmond, and engagement with Mrs. Shelton. He desired to be with Annie, but that could not be. Mrs. Lewis, to a minor degree, was now playing the part of Mrs. Shew, both as lady bountiful and as the " dear friend." The perverse fate which the nature of the man invoked, but which circumstances united strangely, all through his life, to make dramatically perfect, now, in the guise of a friend interested in the *Stylus,* stepped in to provide the means to speed him towards the gulf. The passive instrument of fate was an innocent young man in Illinois, one Edward Horton Norton Patterson.[877]

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[874] This was evidently the last stanza as it appeared in *Griswold* in 1850. Poe later made still further changes in the last stanza of *Lenore*. See note 299.

[875] Poe to Mrs. Shew, March 30, 1849.

Oquawka, or Yellow Banks, was a small town in Illinois, first settled in the 1830's on the Mississippi River, halfway between the Des Moines, and the Rock Island Rapids. In 1837, an old Philadelphia map describes it as being laid out in two sections on an extensive scale. " The soil was sandy." By 1849, although the anticipation of the " extensive scale " had not yet been realized, " the two large warehouses, one grocery, two taverns and *several* dwelling houses " had increased to several dwelling houses more. There was " a neat and substantial bridge " over the Henderson River, and a weekly newspaper, the *Oquawka Spectator.*[878]

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[876] Prof. Woodberry so comments.

[877] Some of the Poe-Patterson correspondence has been published by Gill, Prof. Woodberry, and Prof. Harrison. The account, and the letters here drawn upon, are taken from *Some Letters of Edgar Allan Poe to E. H. N. Patterson of Oquawka, Illinois,* with comments by Eugene Field, Caxton Club Publication, 189 copies, Chicago, 1898.

[878] It was from this " center " that the great American Magazine was to appear. Poe afterward balked at this, and proposed or accepted Patterson's proposal of dating the eastern edition of the *Stylus* from New York, and the western from St. Louis, Missouri.

This sheet had been founded by J. B. Patterson from Winchester, Virginia, who arrived in Oquawka in September, 1835. In the years that followed, he had begotten Edward Howard Norton, written a *Life of Black Hawk,* edited the *Spectator,* and passed to his reward, leaving a tidy little sum to Edward, who came of age in 1849. The son continued to edit the *Spectator.*

For some years, young Patterson had been reading the columns of exchanges which came to the little office of the *Spectator.* Poe's work in *Graham's, Godey's,* and other sheets had attracted his attention, and he admired. Poe's announcements and plans for the great American magazine had also become known to him, and, in 1849, being in possession of his father's money, ambitious, and inexperienced, out of a clear sky he wrote to Poe, making a proposition tantamount to backing the *Stylus.* Patterson wrote his first letter on December 18, 1848, but the poverty-stricken Mr. Poe did not receive it until April, 1849. It must have dropped into his lap like manna. He immediately replied:

> No doubt you will be surprised to hear that your letter, dated Dec. 18, has only this moment (about the middle of April) reached me. I live at the village of Fordham, about 14 miles from New York, on the Harlem Railroad — but as there is no Post Office at the place, I date always from New York, and get all my letters from the city Post Office. When by accident or misapprehension letters are directed to me at Fordham, the clerks — some of them who do not know of my arrangements — forward them to West Farms, the nearest Post Office town, and one which I rarely visit. Thus it happened with your letter. . . . Should you now have changed your mind on the subject, I should be pleased to hear from you again. . . .
>
> Experience, not less than the most mature reflection on this topic, assured me that no *cheap* magazine can ever again prosper in America. We must aim high — address the intellect — the higher classes — of the country (with reference, also, to a certain amount of foreign circulation) and put the work at $5: — going about 112 pp. (or perhaps 128) with occasional wood-engravings in the first style of the art, but only in obvious illustrations of the text. Such a Mag. would begin to pay after 1000 subscribers; and with 5000 would be a fortune worth talking about: — but there is no earthly reason why, under proper management, and with energy and talent, the work might not be made to circulate, at the end of a few years — (say 5) 20,000 copies in which case it would give a clear income of 70 or 80,000 dollars — even if conducted

in the most expensive manner. . . . I need not add that such a Mag would exercise a literary and other influence never yet exercised in America. I presume you know that during the second year of its existence, the *S. L. Messenger* rose from less than 1000 to 5000 subs., and that *Graham,* in 8 months after my joining it, went up from 5000 to 52,000. I do not imagine that a $5 Mag. could even be forced into so great a circulation as this latter; but under certain circumstances, I would answer for 20,000. The whole income from *Graham's* 52,000 never went beyond 15,000$: — the proportioned expenses of the $3 Mags. being so much greater than those of $5 ones.

My plan, in getting up such work as I propose, would be to take a tour through the principal States — especially West and South — visiting the small towns more particularly than the large ones — lecturing as I went, to pay expenses — and staying sufficiently long in each place to interest my personal friends (old college and West Point acquaintances scattered all over the land) in the success of the enterprise. By these means, I could guarantee in 3 months (or 4) to get 1,000 subs. in advance, with their signatures — nearly all pledged to pay at the issue of the first number. Under such circumstances, success would be certain. I have now about 200 names pledged to support me whenever I venture on the undertaking — which perhaps you are aware I have long had in contemplation — only awaiting a secure opportunity. . . .

I will endeavor to pay you a visit at Oquawka, or meet you at any place you suggest. . . .[879]

Patterson replied on May 7 next, rather enthusiastically, and at great length. He was youthfully in earnest. " . . . My plan then (with certain modifications which we can agree upon) is this ":

I will furnish an office and take upon myself the sole charge and expense of Publishing a Magazine (name to be suggested by you) to be issued in monthly numbers at Oquawka, Illinois, containing in every number, 96 pages . . . at the rate of $5 per annum. Of this magazine you are to have the entire editorial control, furnishing at your expense, matter for its pages, which can be transmitted to me by mail or as we may hereafter agree upon. . . . You can make your own bargains with authors and I am to publish upon the best terms I can . . . and we are to share the receipts equally. . . . If my plan accords with your views, you will immediately select a title, write me to that effect, and we will both commence operations. We ought to put out the first number January next. Let me hear from you immediately.

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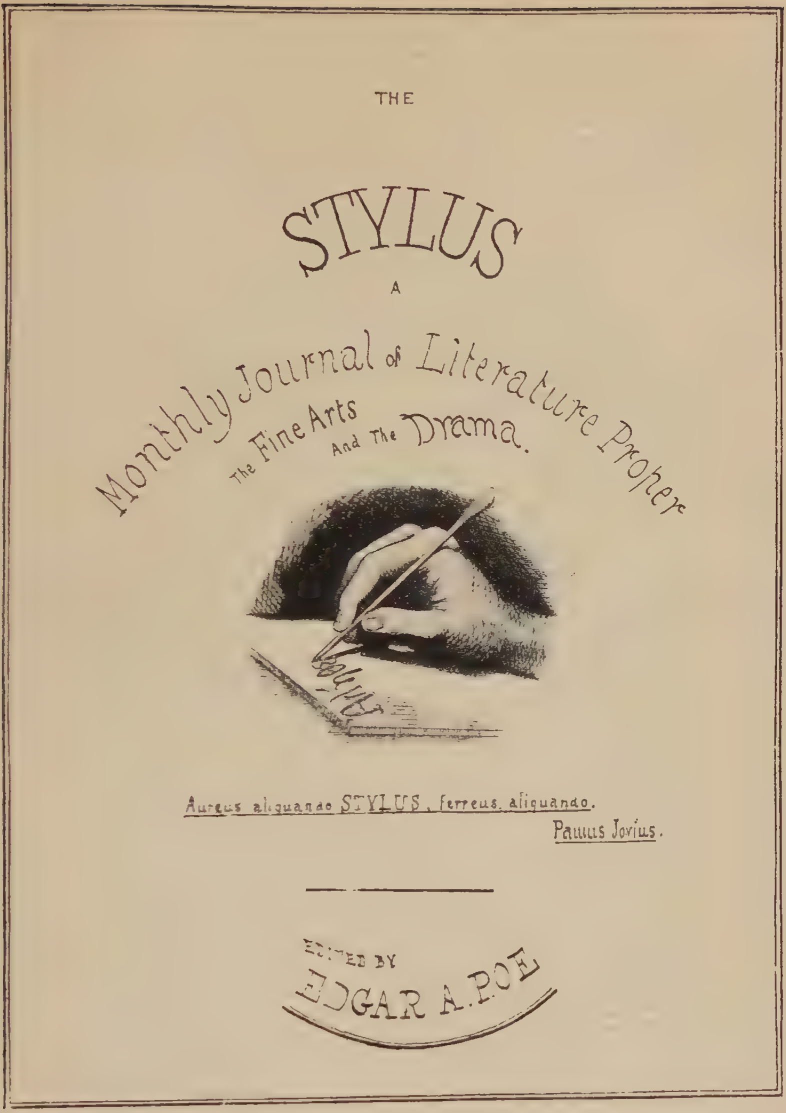
[879] Poe to Patterson, New York (Fordham), April 8, 1849.



THE

STYLUS

A

Monthly Journal of Literature Proper

The Fine Arts And The Drama.

Aureus aliquando STYLUS, ferreus aliquando.

Paulus Jovius.

EDITED BY

EDGAR A. POE

Poe's Own Design for the Cover of the *Stylus*

Courtesy W. Van R. Whitall, Esq., of Pelham, New York

MOYAMENSING PRISON

Published by J. T. Bowen at his Lithographic & Print Colouring Establishment 94 Walnut St Phila

Where Poe was imprisoned for a night in September 1849

Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Historical Society

Poe did reply immediately, under date of May 7, enclosing a design for the cover of the *Stylus* and remarking:

> . . . Today I am going to Boston & Lowell to remain a week, and immediately afterwards I will start for Richmond, where I will await your answer to this letter. Please write to me there, under cover, or to the care of John R. Thompson, Ed. of the *South Lit. Messenger.* On receipt of your letter (should you still be in the mind you now are) I will proceed to St. Louis and there meet you. . . .
>
> I fancy I shall be able to meet the expenses of the tour by lecturing as I proceed; but there is something required in the way of outfit and as I am not overstocked with money (what poor devil author *is?*) I must ask you to advance half of the sum I need to begin with — about $100. Please, therefore, enclose $50 in your reply, which I will get at Richmond. . . .

Leaving the matter of the *Stylus* thus, in a highly promising condition, Poe now departed on his trip northward, and paid a visit of about a week to Annie. Matters in Lowell had then been accommodated, and, for a few days, he was happy by the fireside of those he loved, and who returned his almost childlike affection. Here he wrote the third draft of *The Bells,* and returned to Fordham a few days later.

The cottage there, as we have seen, had been taken for another year. Poe was in arrears for rent, and desperately pressed, so poor in fact that he could not raise the carfare to Richmond. He was, therefore, under the necessity of writing to Richmond to ask that Patterson's letter containing the $50 be forwarded to him in New York. Just as Mr. Clarke had paid for a trip to Washington to start the magazine in 1843, Mr. Patterson was now paying for a trip to Richmond in 1849 — with the same result. Yet such were the inexplicable contradictions of Poe that, on June 26, he wrote to Eveleth:

> . . . I am awaiting the *best opportunity* for its issue; and if by waiting until the day of judgment I perceive still increasing chances of ultimate success, why until the day of judgment I will patiently wait. I am now going to Richmond to 'see about it' — and *possibly* I may get out the first number next January. . . .

All of which means, if it means anything, that Poe did not intend to get out the *Stylus* at all. It too, like all his great dreams, he preferred to have remain where they could be perfect, *i.e.,* in the realms of the imagination.[880] There were sordid aspects to conducting a real magazine in a workaday world, which "Israfel" could no longer bring himself to face. In the meantime he would go to Richmond. New York had become, like Philadelphia in 1844, a town haunted with strangely hostile ghosts. How had it all come about? He was not quite certain — not his fault, of course! He would show them all yet — wait till the *Stylus* was started! In the meantime he would — go home!

But from the first, there was a certain fatality about it, a sense of finality. He was again inexplicably depressed. Another attack was coming on. The heart that had been pounding away for forty years, sometimes fluttering and throbbing, was giving out. His nerves were tautened to the last notch, and the bird-like hands were trembling. There were never to be any more great poems or weird stories from that brain. It was still filled with visions, but they were too strange, too overpowering now for utterance. They were almost insane, like a mad rattle in the shell of a man. The cottage at Fordham was "temporarily closed." The "50$" had come. Eddie was leaving for Richmond, and, for the time being, "Muddie" was to stay with the kind Mrs. Lewis, in the house in Brooklyn where the stuffed raven perched over Pallas. It was the end of June, 1849.

Poe wrote to Dr. Griswold, asking him to superintend the collection of his works. Willis was to write the accompanying biography. The fame of Israfel seemed to him to have been left in good hands. One catches a final glimpse of him upon a sunny morning in Manhattan, nigh a century ago. It is in the parlor of Elizabeth Oakes Smith. As they sat in the long-vanished room chatting, Mrs. Smith's canary, that had been let out of its cage for morning exercise, fluttered about the apartment, and alighted upon the head of Apollo on the mantelpiece.[881]

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[880] Poe *may* already have had in mind "the better opportunity" of conducting the *Stylus* from Richmond on Mrs. Shelton's money (*sic*).

[881] From the *Diary* of Elizabeth Oakes Smith. Miss Smith was about to depart for a lecture in Philadelphia in the Summer of 1849, one of her first, it appears, which places the time of the last interview with Poe.

'See, Mr. Poe,' I said, 'I do not keep a raven but there is song to song. Why did you not put an owl on the head of Pallas? However, there would have been no poem then.'

'No, there is mystery about the raven.'

Then he referred to Mrs. Whitman. . . .

'Such women as you and Helena, and a few others ought to be installed as queens, and artists of all kinds should be privileged to pay you court. They would grow wise and holy under such companionship. . . .'

The last time I saw him he called when my carriage was at the door on my way to Philadelphia, where I was to lecture. He seemed greatly disappointed, even grieved, saying over and over:

'I am sorry I cannot talk with you, I had so much to say. So very much I wished to say.'

And so she left him, as the carriage went down the street, haunted always afterwards by ". . . his look of pain, his unearthly eyes, his weird look of desolation" as he stood there in the sunshine, looking greatly disappointed and murmuring, "I had . . . so much, so very much, I wished to say."

The plans which finally interrupted all further conversation were completed by June 29.[882] On that day, in company with Mrs. Clemm, in great distress at the prospect of parting, Poe crossed the ferry to Brooklyn where he and "Muddie" spent the night at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Sylvanus D. Lewis, the latter the poetess frequently mentioned, a Baltimore girl of some attainments, and the author of *The Child of the Sea,* which Poe had lately and favorably reviewed.

The Lewises were most kindly, and the parting the next morning, darkened by the poet's prophetic gloom, and conviction of impending disaster, was affectionately dramatic. One catches a fleeting glimpse of the little group on the steps of the old Brooklyn house at 125 Dean Street. There is the legal looking Sylvanus, "Stella," with her coiffure of luxuriant ringlets, Mrs. Clemm crying, and Edgar, also weeping, standing on the sidewalk, with his carpet-bag in his hand. He turned to say goodbye to Mrs. Lewis:

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[882] There is some indication that the cottage at Fordham was closed about the middle of June and that, during the interval between that time and his departure, Poe lived with a friend in New York. The matter is not clear.

> He took my hand in his, and looking in my face, said, 'Dear Stella, my much beloved friend. You truly understand and appreciate me — I have a presentiment that I shall never see you again . . . If I never return write my life. You can and will do me justice.'[883]

Then he and Mrs. Clemm left together for the boat.

> 'God bless you, my own darling mother. Do not fear for Eddy! See how good I will be while I am away from you, and will come back to love and comfort you.'[884]

These were the last words the trembling woman heard as the boat pulled out, leaving her to return to spend weeks of helpless anxiety. Eddie did not return. The mission which fate had conferred upon Maria Clemm was over. Her reward was a pair of painfully rheumatic, and absolutely empty hands.

The traveler to Richmond via Philadelphia continued on his way. He was passing over the same route which he had followed eighteen years before, but he was now speeding on the last lap of his voyage much more rapidly. The city he gazed back upon for the last time had grown, as if by magic. In two decades the face of nature had been altered. The smoke was darker, and there was an enormous convention of stacks and sails. One wonders what the author of *Mellonta Tauta* thought as he gazed behind him at the Island, and, none too hopefully, before thinking, prophetically, perhaps, of "the entire area . . . densely packed with houses, some of them twenty stories high, land (for some unaccountable reason) being considered as especially precious in just this vicinity. . . . They were by no means civilized, however, but cultivated various arts and sciences after the fashion of their time. . . ."[885]

Mr. James K. Polk was in the White House. The War with Mexico was over, and, in Philadelphia, the lithographers were thriving at re-printing American maps. A red tinge had leaped southwestward to the Pacific. Mr. Poe remarked that, "The women . . . were oddly deformed by a protuberance of the region just below the small of the back — although most unaccountably, this deformity was looked upon altogether in the light of beauty."[885] The steamboat went on, faster than it had in 1831, locomotives also were swifter. Mr. Poe must have hurtled into Philadelphia amid a shower of sparks, sometime about the late afternoon of July 1, 1849.

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[883] Mrs. Lewis has left a careful description of the scene, *Ingram*. She never felt capable of undertaking Poe's biography, she says later. This was fortunate for Poe.

[884] Mrs. Clemm.

[885] From *Mellonta Tauta*.

In his scantily packed, but flowered carpet-bag, there were two lectures, one of them certainly on *The Poetic Principle,* — and in his pockets there may have been as much as $40.[886] The station was not far from the water front, and the water front was then roaring with all the mad excitement of the Gold Rush of 1849. There were many saloons, all of them liberally patronized, and in one of them it is certain, that after the dusty ride in the cars from Perth Amboy, somewhere along the hot cobbled streets of Philadelphia, Mr. Poe entered and took a drink. As one of the minor consequences, he remained in Philadelphia for a fortnight.

The precise order of the events, and calamities which now overtook the man can never be precisely reconstructed.[887] His affairs no longer moved by any means to a lute's well tunéd law. Confusion, utter and horrible, surrounded him, because confusion was complete within. He was overtaken by delirium tremens. From the mercifully reticent recollections of his friends, and some correspondence, a few facts remain.

The office of John Sartain, then the proprietor of *Sartain's Magazine,* was invaded suddenly, one July day, by a disheveled and trembling caricature of a great poet crying out for protection, and fleeing from the imaginary pursuers who were in conspiracy against him. This was an habitual hallucination with Poe when in a condition approaching collapse. The long years of embittered controversy, the frequent receipt of angry, and sometimes threatening and scandalous letters, had left an indelible impress on his sensitive mind. As he walked the streets of Philadelphia, it seemed to him that the corner loungers looked at him malevolently, and that conspirators were on his tracks. His old friend, Sartain, took him home, where Poe demanded a razor to shave off his mustache, in order to disguise himself from his imaginary tormentors. This, for obvious reasons, was refused. With difficulty, Sartain persuaded him to lie down, and watched through the night, as he was afraid to leave him alone, and Poe felt that he needed protection. The attentions of the friend continued all next day while

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[886] With the remainder of the money sent by Patterson, $50, Poe probably bought some clothes, "outfit," — see Poe to Patterson May 7, 1849. The fare to Philadelphia was about $4.

[887] The story of Poe's experience in Philadelphia comes from John Sartain's reminiscences, also letters of Poe to Mrs. Clemm between July 7 and July 18, 1849, and the article and correspondence published by C. C. Burr in the *Nineteenth Century* (February, 1852), pages 19 to 33. The most available reference is Woodberry, 1909, vol. 2, pages 309–312. See also Poe to Patterson, Richmond, July 19, 1849. Also Gill's *Life of Poe* for an account of the Sartain incident, from whom Gill had it direct.

> . . . without cessation Poe poured forth, in the rich, musical tones for which he was distinguished the fevered imageries of his brilliant but over-excited imagination. The all absorbing theme which still retained possession of his mind, was a fearful conspiracy that threatened his destruction. Vainly his friend endeavored to reassure and persuade him. He rushed on with unwearied steps, threading different streets, his companion striving to lead him homeward but still in vain.[888]

During this terrific ramble, Poe led Sartain to the Fairmount Reservoir, where they climbed together the steep flights of stairs leading to the top, while the infernal-heavenly tongue went on and on, hinting at suicide, " insisting upon the imminence of peril, and pleading touchingly for protection." After some persuasion, Poe returned with his companion to the house. The experience of the kindly and patient Sartain seems to have given him an incandescent glimpse into landscapes beyond Pennsylvania. Nor were his trials yet over. Poe escaped from the house and wandered off to spend the night in a field. Here he " fell into a slumber " in which a white-robed vision appeared to him, and warned him against suicide. It was probably a dream of Virginia. This seems to have quieted him somewhat.

Just how the days passed, neither Poe nor his friends ever knew. He was completely beyond himself, incapable of explanation. He was arrested for being intoxicated, and taken to Moyamensing Prison where he spent a night.[889]

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[888] Gill's *Life of Poe*, page 235.

Here on the battlements appeared a white female form that addressed him in whispers. " If I had not heard what she said," he declared, " it would have been the end of me." Next morning he was haled in with the other unfortunates before Mayor Gilpin, and was recognized. " Why, this is Poe, the poet," was remarked, and he was dismissed without a fine. When asked by Sartain why he had been incarcerated, he replied, probably troubled by remembrance of the English accusations, that he had forged a check. A symptom, frequent in cases suffering from Poe's complaint, now developed. One which Poe mentions as " cholera."

His wandering evidently continued for some time. He was under hallucinations about the death of Mrs. Clemm, and, while with Sartain, *begged him persistently for laudanum.* Two old friends, Chester Chauncey Burr and George Lippard, the latter the poet-novelist who had known him in the days of friendship with Henry Beck Hirst, now rescued him from the streets, and cared for him. On July 7, he was able to write to Mrs. Clemm:[890]

MY DEAR, DEAR MOTHER, — I have been so ill — have had the cholera, or spasms quite as bad, and can now hardly hold the pen.

The very instant you get this come to me. The joy of seeing you will almost compensate for my sorrows. We can but die together. It is of no use to reason with me now; I must die. I have no desire to live since I have done *Eureka*. I could accomplish nothing more. For your sake it would be sweet to live, but we must die together. You have been all — all to me, darling ever beloved mother, and dearest truest friend.

I was never really insane except upon occasions when my heart was touched.

I have been taken to prison once since I came here for getting drunk; but then I was not. It was about Virginia.

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[889] Prof. Woodberry considers Poe's imprisonment to have been an hallucination, but both Poe and Sartain refer to it as a fact, with details, while the hallucinations are specifically described in contradistinction. That Poe would have been arrested in his condition is the most probable thing that could have happened.

[890] This letter was dated from " New York," an obvious slip of the pen made by a sick man. Poe afterwards refers to the dreadful handwriting in the letters to Mrs. Clemm from May 7 to July 14. His handwriting was an accurate index of his condition at any time.

Poe evidently had little remembrance of what Sartain had done for him.[891] He remained in the care of his friends, Burr and Lippard. The latter called upon Poe's old employers for help, and Graham with his usual charity spoke of Poe with great pity, and contributed $5. Charles Peterson, who was still in the office at Poe's old desk, did likewise. It was probably he who had helped Poe in August, 1847, under similar circumstances.[892] The old friends in Philadelphia understood it all only too well — and helped when they could. Burr now purchased a steamboat ticket for Poe as far as Baltimore, and provided with the $10 contributed by Graham and Peterson, he set out for Richmond with his carpet-bag that had been lost for ten days. The lectures had been stolen, and the discovery of this loss was a staggering blow. He was accompanied to the dock by the faithful Burr. It was Friday, the thirteenth.

The trip from Philadelphia to Richmond is, for so obscure an event, remarkably clear. A boat leaving Baltimore for Richmond on Friday evening was taken by the traveler, and, as it neared Richmond, he wrote a short note in the cabin to Mrs. Clemm:

> Near Richmond
>
> The weather is awfully hot, and besides all this, I am so homesick I don't know what to do. I never wanted to see any one half so bad as I want to see my own darling mother. It seems to me that I would make any sacrifice to hold you by the hand once more, and get you to cheer me up for I am terribly depressed. I do not think that any circumstances will ever tempt me to leave you again. When I am with you I can bear anything, but when I am away from you I am too miserable to live.[893]

The parting from Mrs. Clemm, with its almost immediately fatal results, brings out clearly the fact that Poe's existence had been prolonged by her. Poe was genuinely worried about having to leave her alone, but there runs through all of his thoughts and delusions in Philadelphia about Mrs. Clemm, an undercurrent of fear that with Virginia buried, and he himself away, she might make a home for herself some place else. Nothing was further from her thoughts.

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[891] Poe gives Burr and Lippard most of the credit for saving him.

[892] See Chapter XXIV, page 758.

[893] Poe to Mrs. Clemm, July 14, 1849 (first letter of that date).

Her movements and doings, during the time of Poe's trip to Richmond, have been preserved in her letter written July 9, 1849, to Annie. She had evidently not received the letter written to her by Poe from Philadelphia on the seventh. She said she had not heard from Eddie for ten days. " Eddy was obliged to go through Philadelphia and I much fear for him. . . . Oh, if any evil has befallen him what can comfort me? " The day after Poe had left New York, Mrs. Clemm had left Mrs. Lewis's house for Fordham. On the way out she called on a " rich friend," who had made her promises of help, but who had never been told the whole desperate situation. Mrs. Clemm unburdened herself, at which the friend advised her to leave Poe. " Anyone to propose to *me* to leave my Eddy," she says, " what a cruel insult! No one to nurse him and take care of him when he is sick and helpless! " A few days later she must have received every confirmation of her worst fears, by the delivery of his shocking letters. He was, of course, in the deepest gulf of remorse, gloom, and self-disgust after the Philadelphia interval, and appears, upon his arrival in Richmond, to have almost succumbed.

Poe arrived in Richmond on the night of Saturday, July 14, and went by instinct directly to Duncan Lodge.[894] There he was assured of tender care from Rosalie and the Mackenzies, and that his infirmities, and terrible condition of body, clothes, and mind would be decently concealed. He seems to have remained there, at most, for only a very few days. On the evening of his arrival, a few hours after the note written on the steamer, he again addressed a letter to Mrs. Clemm:

> . . . I got here with two dollars over — of which I enclose you one. Oh, God, my Mother, shall we ever meet again? If possible, oh COME! My clothes are so horrible and I am so ill. Oh, if you could come to me, my mother. Write instantly — Oh do not fail. God forever bless you.
>
> EDDY[895]

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[894] Mrs. Weiss so states.

[895] Poe to Mrs. Clemm, September 14, 1849 (second letter of that date). The fare from Baltimore was $7. Poe started from Philadelphia, ticket paid by Burr to Baltimore, with $10. Meals probably cost $1. This left him $2 in Richmond, one of which he here sends to Mrs. Clemm. A typical piece of Poesque finance.

A few days later Poe moved to the *Old Swan Tavern,* between Eighth and Ninth on Broad Street, which had once been a place of considerable repute, but was now of a distinctly past reputation, the boarding place of bachelor business men, and their associates. In a small frame house on Broad Street next to the *Swan,* there lived, at that time, Dr. George Rawlings, who, during the early days of Poe's stay, was called in to visit him. This was apparently during the aftermath of the Philadelphia experience. Dr. Rawlings said Poe was still violent at intervals, and at one time drew a pistol and threatened to shoot him.[896] He soon afterwards recovered and writes Mrs. Clemm, " I have not drank anything since Friday morning, and then only a little Port Wine." This was on the nineteenth, and " Friday " refers to the day he left Philadelphia the week before.

Once in the hands of kind friends and medical attention, his recovery was rapid. He received a letter from Mrs. Clemm which greatly cheered him, and five days after his arrival he wrote to " Muddie " again in a more hopeful mood:

> Richmond, Thursday, *July* 19
>
> MY OWN BELOVED MOTHER — You will see at once by the handwriting of this letter, that I am better — much better — in health and spirits. Oh! if you only knew how your dear letter comforted me! It acted like magic. Most of my sufferings arose from the terrible idea that I could not get rid of — the idea that you were dead. For more than ten days I was totally deranged, although I was not drinking one drop; and during this interval I imagined the most horrible calamities.
>
> All was hallucination, arising from an attack which I had never before experienced — an attack of *mania-á-potu.* May heaven grant that it prove a warning to me for the rest of my days. . . .
>
> All is not lost yet, and ' the darkest hour is just before daylight.' Keep up courage, my own beloved mother — all may yet go well. I will put forth all my energies. . . .

On the same date, he also dispatched a letter to Patterson, giving an attack of cholera in Philadelphia as the cause of his delay in acknowledging the $50, and for interrupting his correspondence. For a short time now the ghost of the *Stylus* and other troublesome things were laid aside. Israfel had come home to the only part of the real world that he loved.

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[896] J. H. Whitty, *Memoir,* large edition, page lxxiii.

As the gloom of the pit which he had just escaped was deep, so was the old familiar light upon the hills and streets, that he knew and loved from boyhood, bright, and tinged with the amber glow of melancholy memory so dear to his heart. It is pleasant to record that the scene in which he now, for the first time, took an accepted and applauded part, just before the curtain fell, was enacted in the atmosphere of an Indian Summer of youth, and a renaissance of old loves and friendships. Richmond had changed, and had grown, but not to a disturbing degree. A new generation had grown up, but many of the old places, the old faces, the customs and manners, the tricks of speech, and the Southern attitude of living for being rather than for possessing, — which so well suited his own temperament, — were still there. An infinite host of memories must have rushed in and transported him, as he breathed once more the syrupy odor of tobacco, peculiar to the Richmond air. Before he remembered anything at all, it was through this Virginia atmosphere that Frances Allan had carried him home from the milliner's house to Tobacco Alley.

During the last stay, in what must be regarded as his native city, the returned exile divided his time very largely among the houses of his friends. The Mackenzies at Duncan Lodge, Mrs. Shelton's house on Church Hill, and Talevera, the home of the Talleys.

> Broad Street . . . extended several miles in a straight line from Chimborazo Heights and Church Hill on the east, where Mrs. Shelton (Elmira) had her residence, to the western suburbs, where *Duncan Lodge* and our home of *Talevera* were situated. This was the route which Poe traversed in his visits to Mrs. Shelton. There were no street cars in those days, hacks were expensive, and the walk from *The Swan* to Church Hill was long and fatiguing. Poe would break his journey by stopping to visit at the office of Dr. John Carter, a young physician who lived about halfway between these points.[897]

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[897] Susan Archer Weiss, *Home Life of Poe.* Many of the Richmond incidents must be drawn from this source (with care). Mrs. Weiss, then Miss Talley, lived in Richmond, and saw much of Poe in 1849.

This young doctor had considerable influence with Poe, and later on attended him at Duncan Lodge. The poet's fame, the report that he was in the city to pay attention to Mrs. Shelton, and the influence of Mrs. Julia Mayo Cabell, who entertained for him, thus in a sense lifting the family ban, made Poe's reception in Richmond entirely different from any that he had received before.[898] The bitter feeling in regard to "his conduct to his guardian" had largely subsided, except in a few implacable directions, and open doors were more frequent, and wider than ever before.

Poe, on his part, was most careful in his social attitude. His manner was now not only dramatic, but assured and distinguished, and he was careful, knowing the old prejudice against him, to make no advances, especially to women. Although the younger generation, particularly, were anxious to meet him, he seems to have confined himself very largely to the society of old friends.

Of Poe in his latter years, while in Richmond, there are several excellent descriptions by competent observers. Basil C. Gildersleeve, the great classical scholar, then a youth, remembered meeting him frequently upon Broad Street.

> A poetical figure, if there ever was one, clad in black as was the fashion then — slender — erect — the subtle lines of his face fixed in meditation. I thought him wonderfully handsome, the mouth being the only weak point.[899]

Poe's fame was even then quite startling. Professor Gildersleeve tells of being too shy to seek an introduction, but of obtaining, through J. R. Thompson, Poe's autograph, of which the lad was extremely proud. Edward V. Valentine, then a young boy of about twelve, remembers seeing Poe pass the house, and hearing his uncle say, "There goes Edgar Poe," whereupon he jumped up, ran out into the street, and peered up into the famous gentleman's face, who smiled and passed on. All these were small straws that showed how the wind blew.

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[898] See a previous reference to a Mrs. Mayo, a protagonist of Poe of former times, Chapter XVII.

[899] Given by Harrison, *Biography*, page 315.

He was now greatly pestered to read *The Raven,* which he did on several occasions at various houses. Rosalie also, it appears, annoyed him a good deal by following him about like the lamb which Mrs. Hale forever conferred upon Mary. Rosalie was tremendously fond of her brother; delighted at the applause when he read; and was always seeking to do him little kindnesses. Rosalie Poe was, *by no means, the feeble-minded woman* that she has been represented to be. She was, says a personal acquaintance,[900] "rather pretty, and resembled 'himself' somewhat in appearance, but was as different as possible in mental capacity (*i.e.*), she was amiable, and sweet-tempered, but as a companion wholly tiresome and monotonous. She seemed to have little or no individuality or force of character." Miss Poe had taught writing at Miss Jane Mackenzie's school for nine years, and was an elegant needlewoman. Rosalie was, at worst, a rather high grade moron. Various other lower mental classifications used to describe her have been technically misapplied. Poe was, nevertheless, much annoyed by her upon occasions, particularly when calling upon Mrs. Shelton. The same curiosity which had annoyed Mrs. Clemm at Fordham in 1846, now bothered him. He would send her home, or elsewhere, upon suddenly remembered and mythical errands.

The wooing of Elmira now went on apace. Mrs. A. Barrett Shelton had now been a widow for some years. She had borne two daughters, both named for her, and both of whom died in infancy, and a son who was then a youth.[901] Mr. Shelton had been a successful merchant, and had left the income of a considerable property to his wife. The estate, on her death, was to go to other heirs. Not long after his arrival in Richmond, Poe called upon her. She was then a rather personable middle-aged woman, with a good deal of self-possession, and pious.

Upon being informed by the servant that a gentleman had called, Mrs. Shelton came downstairs. It was Sunday, and she was dressed for church. Upon her entering the room, Poe rose, saying, with considerable emotion, "Oh! *Elmira,* is it you!" Mrs. Shelton knew him at once, and received him cordially but continued on her way to church, with which she said she never allowed anything to interfere. She asked Poe to call again. He did so. Old times were talked over, and Poe now proposed that Elmira keep the promise which she had made to him twenty-four years before.[902] She at first thought he was jesting romantically, but he soon convinced her he was in earnest. At this time, probably towards the end of July, she arrived at what she later described as an "understanding" with her old flame.

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[900] Mrs. Clarke, previously mentioned in the Summer of 1848.

[901] Inscription on Mrs. Shelton's tombstone in Shockoe Cemetery in Richmond. Her own name is lacking, but burial records confirm. Also Edward V. Valentine to the author in Richmond, in May, 1926.

The relations between the two are now fairly clear. Poe's early love for the little Elmira was undoubtedly one of the most normal and complete that he ever experienced. It was even more than "Helen" Stanard's the great romance of his youth; *Tamerlane,* Henry Poe's contributions in Baltimore,[903] *Merlin,* by L. A. Wilmer, and a mass of biographical references all prove this. It was partly the loss of Elmira which had driven Poe from Richmond. Elmira, on her part, had found herself deceived by her parents into marrying Mr. Shelton, and, as we have seen, had cherished an affection for her boy lover, whose letters from the University had never reached her. Her resentment over the affair had afterward alarmed her husband. As the years went on, all this had, of course, been laid aside, but the memory of it, with all its connotations, must have made Poe's renewal of his old suit seem like a revival of her girlhood. It was a refreshing draught from the fountain of romance and of youth. Poe, we may be sure, approached her on the basis of the fulfillment of her old promise. He was now famous, an embodiment of his own words in *Tamerlane.*

Her own Alexis, who should plight,
The love he plighted *then* — again,
And raise his infancy's delight,
The Bride and Queen of Tamerlane.[238]

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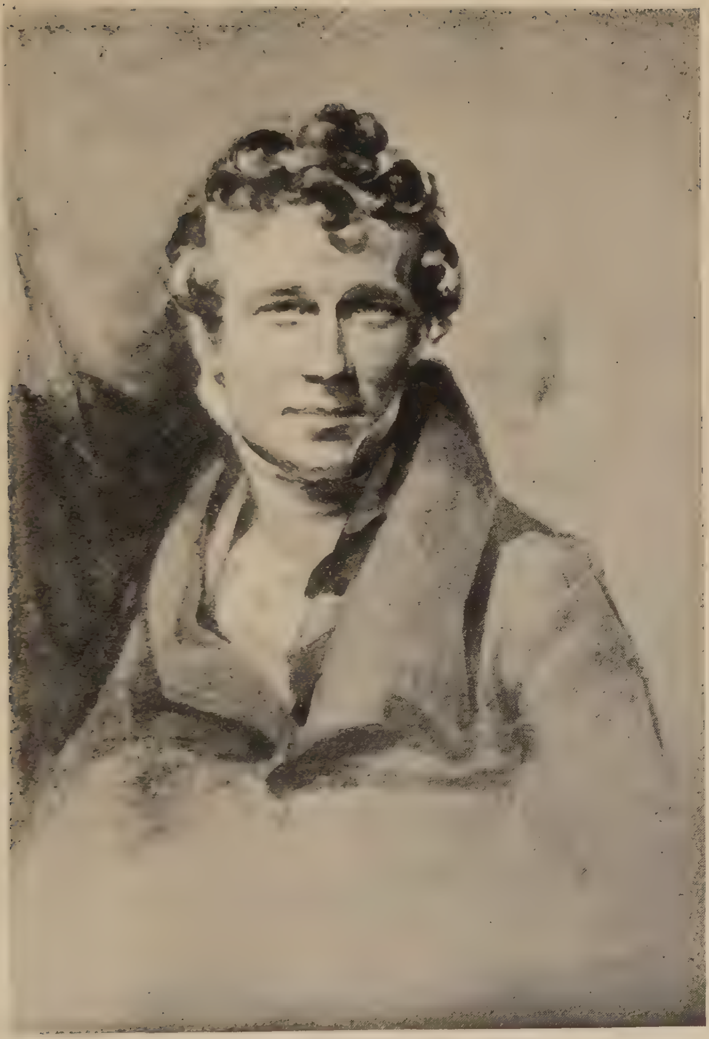
[902] See Chapter VIII, page 144.

[903] Particularly *The Pirate* in the Baltimore *North American* for 1827. See *Poe's Brother,* Doran, 1926.

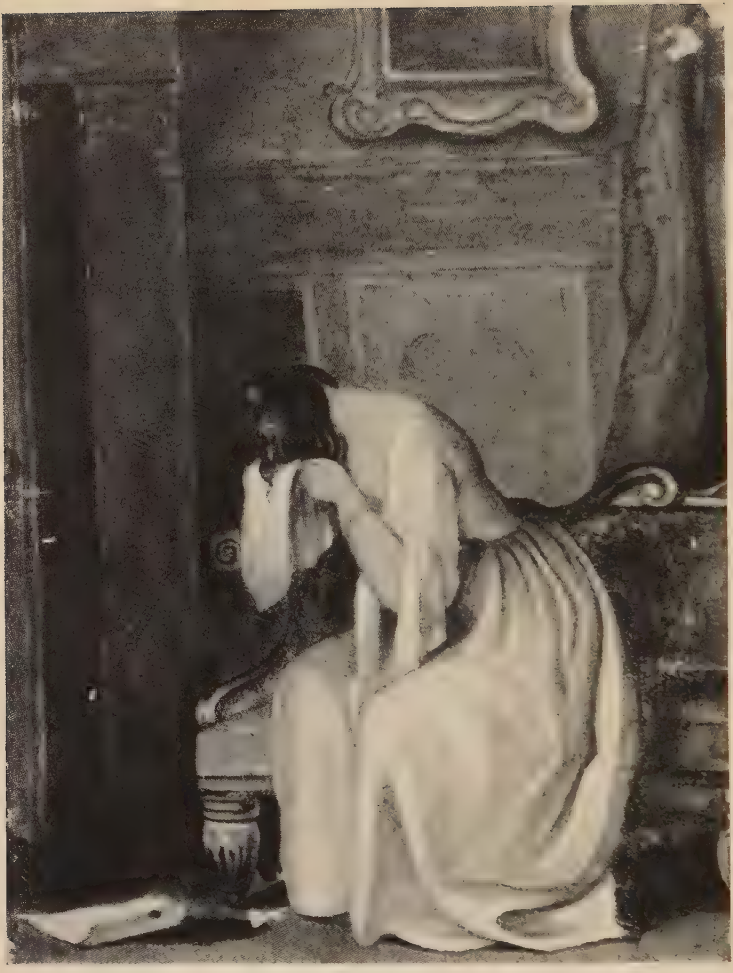


Robert Sully

Portrait of the Artist by a friend

Robert Sully was a close friend of Poe from boyhood days. He was a nephew of Thomas Sully, and a son of Matthew Sully, who had played on the stage with *Mrs.* Poe. An artist of considerable ability, who is thought to have painted a portrait of Poe

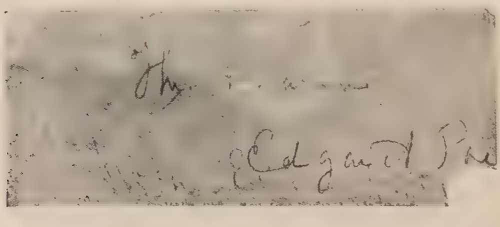
From a photograph of the original sketch
Courtesy of Miss Julia Sully and of the Edgar Allan Poe Shrine



The Fatal Letter

The "Lost Lenore" picture, thought to deal with POE's early love affair with ELMIRA ROYSTER, and to represent the "Lenore" of *The Raven.* Given to ROBERT SULLY, the artist, by POE with his own signature and a reference to *The Raven* on the back, now obliterated

From a photograph of the original with signature
Courtesy of the Edgar Allan Poe Shrine, Richmond, Virginia



Thy [illegible]

Edgar A Poe

She remembered him leaning over her at the piano, while they sang. It is certain that all this, flimsy as it may seem, played a great part in the renewal of their friendship. She asked Poe to give her one of the little sketches that he had made for her in 1825. He wrote to Mrs. Clemm about it, and later on must have found it after all, for it was discovered among her effects.[904] (*See illustration, page* 145.)

Of the other and worldly considerations there is little need to speak. They were undoubtedly present. Poe saw in Elmira a woman for whom he had once cherished an ardent flame, and who may still have been attractive to him. She could make him comfortable, provide him with a home, and the basis of a social reputation in Richmond, where he intended now to remain on one of the newspapers, and it is also probable that he hoped to be able, under these circumstances, to use his intended wife's fortune as a better basis upon which to conduct the *Stylus* than that offered by Patterson. Above all, he would be living in Richmond, and Mrs. Clemm would be provided with a home. He was very explicit, and anxious about that, as Mrs. Shelton's letter to Mrs. Clemm discloses. Such were some of the factors which, in all probability, entered into this Indian Summer romance. Poe told Mrs. Shelton that she was his "Lost Lenore."

To Robert Sully, his old boyhood friend, of whom he now once more saw a great deal, spending hours with him in his studio, he gave the picture, called the "Fatal Letter," which Mrs. Osgood had noticed hanging over his desk at 85 Amity Street. It seems to have been an illustration for one of Byron's poems, and to Poe represented the despair of Elmira when she had discovered one of his own love letters after her engagement to Mr. Shelton. There was an inscription on the back, now obliterated, with some reference to the Lost Lenore in *The Raven,* and his signature.[905]

The course of true love was not all smooth even now, however. Poe's reputation was, of course, known to Elmira, who, it is said, was somewhat worried about her fortune, and not especially enthusiastic about the *Stylus* scheme. She now made some arrangements to protect her property that are said to have nettled Poe. They had been seen at church together, and talk of the engagement was rife, but, about the beginning of August, a coolness arose between them that threatened for a while to break off the affair. Mrs. Shelton wrote demanding her letters, and she was for a while publicly avoided by Poe.[906]

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[904] Poe's reference to this picture in a letter to Mrs. Clemm from Richmond, September, 1848, is most amusing, and illuminating as to the little domestic artifices practised by Poe and his mother-in-law. See Harrison, vol. 2, pages 369 and 370.

[905] Edward V. Valentine to the author in Richmond, May, 1926. Robert Sully started a painting of the scene of *The Raven* never finished. See Mrs. Weiss.

On August the seventh, he lectured before a small but enthusiastic audience of his friends and admirers in the *Exchange* Concert Rooms on *The Poetic Principle*. Several accounts of the occasion remain. Mrs. Shelton was present, but, after the talk was concluded, Poe ignored her and joined the Talley party from Talavera. All the press notices were entirely laudatory except that written by Daniel, whom Poe had " challenged " the Summer before. This appeared in the *Richmond Examiner* for August 21 and was, in part, as follows:[907]

> Poe's subject was *The Poetic Principle* and he treated it with all the acuteness and imagination that we had expected from him. We were glad to hear the lecturer explode what he properly pronounced to be the poetic 'heresy of modern times,' to wit: that poetry should have a purpose, an end to accomplish beyond that of ministering to our sense of the beautiful. . . .
>
> Mr. Poe made good his distinction with a great deal of acuteness and in a very clever manner. His various pieces of criticism upon the popular poets of the country were for the most part just, and were very entertaining. But we were disappointed in Mr. Poe's recitations. We had heard a good deal of his manner, but it does not answer our wants. His voice is soft and distinct, but neither clear nor sonorous. He does not make rhyme effective; he reads all verse like blank verse; and yet he gives it a sing-song of his own more monotonous than any versification. On the two last syllables of every sentence he invariably falls a fifth. He did not make his own *Raven* an effective piece of reading. At this we would not be surprised were any other than the author its reader. The chief charm perhaps of that extraordinary composition is the

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[906] *Mrs. Weiss*. She tells of a call of Mrs. Shelton upon Mrs. Mackenzie, to get the latter to prevail upon Poe to return her letters.

[907] J. H. Whitty, *Memoir* to *Collected Poems*, small edition, pages lxxiv, lxxv, lxxvi, calls attention to this item in the *Examiner* and reprints the entire article.

> strange and subtle music of the versification. As in Mr. Longfellow's rhythm we can hear it with our mind's ear while we read it ourselves, but no human organs are sufficiently delicate to weave it into articulate sounds. For this reason we are not surprised at ordinary failures in reading these pieces. But we anticipated some peculiar charm in their utterances by the lips of him who created the verse, and in this we were disappointed. A large audience was in attendance. Indeed the concert room was completely filled. Mr. Poe commenced his career in this city, and those who had not seen him since the days of his obscurity of course felt no little curiosity to behold so famous a townsman. Mr. Poe is a small thin man, slightly formed, keen visaged, with dark complexion, dark hair, and we believe dark eyes. His face is not an ordinary one. The forehead is well developed and the nose somewhat more prominent than usual. Mr. Poe is a man of very decided genius. Indeed we know of no other writer in the United States who has half the chance to be remembered in the history of literature. But his reputation will rest on a very small minority of his compositions. Among all his poems there are only two pieces which are not execrably bad, — *The Raven* and *Dream-Land*. . . . Had Mr. Poe possessed talent in the place of genius, he might have been a popular and money-making author. He would have written a great many more good things than he has; but his title to immortality would not and could not be surer than it is. For the few things that the author has written which are at all valuable are coins stamped with the unmistakable die. They are of themselves; *sui generis*, unlike any diagram in Time's kaleidoscope, either past, present, or to come — and gleam with the hues of Eternity.

On the other hand the *Richmond Whig* hoped that Mr. Poe's lecture would be repeated. Basil Gildersleeve was present, and remembers Poe's reading of *The Raven*. Professor Gildersleeve said that upon that occasion Poe was *not* dramatic in his delivery, but was so sensitive to the music of his own verse that he emphasized it markedly in his delivery. Poe was greatly elated over his success, and reception, and made enough money to exist. However, he writes Mrs. Clemm that he can, as yet, send her nothing, commenting enthusiastically upon his press notices, nevertheless.

There were also frequent readings of *The Raven* at the houses of friends, once at the Talleys where he was especially *en rapport*, and we hear of one occasion when a June-bug ruined the solemnity of the occasion while an old lady tried to protect the poet from the attentions of the insect with her fan. Poe was vastly annoyed.

On the same date as the lecture (August 7), Poe again wrote to Patterson, once more alluding to the effects of cholera, calomel, and a state akin to congestion of the brain, as the cause for his not having written more. In this letter, which closed the correspondence,[908] Poe balked at the idea of a $3 magazine which Patterson was inclined to favor, and argued for his favorite figure of $5. He was now evidently inclined to put the matter off, probably on account of other prospects, and suggests meeting Patterson at St. Louis, and deferring the appearance of the *Stylus* to July 1, 1850. It was the last glimmer of a ghost that had haunted him since the 1830's.[453] He had, as he hinted to Eveleth that he might do, put its appearance off until the Day of Judgment. The darling dream of his ambition thus slipped unnoticed into the glimmering oblivion of eternity.

A round of parties and entertainments continued. Poe did not have a dress coat, and was embarrassed — and there were other complications. It was hard *not* to take what was pressed upon him, and in August he was again overtaken by another attack of his old trouble, and was attended at Duncan Lodge by his friend on Broad Street, Dr. Carter. There had been another occasion earlier, when he had been nursed in his rooms at the *Old Swan* by the Mackenzies. On the second occasion he was taken home by them. It was very serious. In his condition, one drink would have been sufficient to bring it on. Only the skill of a medical man saved him, and Dr. Carter warned him that one more indulgence would certainly be fatal. The conversation was long and earnest.

Poe told the medical friend of his own desperate efforts to free himself from the clutch of alcohol, and how earnestly he desired to do so. *There is no use denying that his condition, his history, and his admissions mark him at this time as a dipsomaniac.* At this interview with Dr. Carter, he burst into tears, asserting with all the solemnity, and pathetic earnestness that any soul could be capable of, that he *would* restrain himself, that he *would* hereafter withstand the temptation. There can be no doubt that he meant it, and trembled at the thought of failure.

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[908] Continued after Poe's death by J. H. Thompson, the editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger.*

To give all possible force to his own resolutions, of whose weakness he knew only too well, it seems to have been shortly after this last seizure that he joined the Shockoe Hill Division of the Sons of Temperance, where he was administered the oath to abstain totally by W. J. Glenn, the presiding officer of the Society. Glenn avers that, until Poe's death in Baltimore, nothing irregular was noticed in his conduct, although a brother teetotaler of the same lodge, who kept a cobbler's shop on Broad Street, was awakened one night shortly afterward, about two hours before daylight, by the loud knocks of Israfel demanding a pair of boots that had been left with the shoe-maker some days before for repairs.[909] A notice of Mr. Poe's having joined the ranks of the Sons of Temperance appeared in the *Philadelphia Bulletin,* copied from the *Richmond Whig* early in September. His doings, in fact, were noticed widely. Notices of the successful lecture appeared even in the *Cincinnati Atlas*.[909]

As Summer neared its end, Poe was much seen about Broad Street. He still spent some of his time at the office of the *Messenger* with his friend Thompson. In August, a long review of Mrs. Osgood's poems appeared in that paper, when a series of the *Marginalia,* Numbers 11 to 15 inclusive, had been coming out from May to September, 1849. Thompson, who knew Poe's strength and weakness, was uniformly kind, and practically helpful.

Poe had now made for himself a new journalistic connection in his home town. He was a newspaper man, and felt at home in journalistic offices, drawn to the noise of presses, and the desk piled with proof. Like many professional writers, he connected the pen and the press, and must often have composed in the same building where his manuscript went to print. Dressed in a white linen coat and trousers, a black velvet vest, and a broad, planter's

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[909] W. J. Glenn to Prof. J. A. Harrison, Richmond, Virginia, December 4, 1900. Published by Harrison, *Biography,* pages 320 to 322. Also see J. H. Whitty, *Memoir, Collected Poems,* large edition, page lxxiii.

Panama hat, Mr. Poe might have been seen in the late Summer of 1849 about the office of the *Richmond Examiner*.

> . . . He was the most notable figure among the group of specialists that gathered around John M. Daniel, editor of the *Richmond Examiner*. Daniel was an electric battery, fully charged, whose touches shocked the staid and lofty-minded leaders in Virginia politics. There was about him that indefinable charm that draws men of genius towards one another, though differing in the quality and measure of their endowment. There was Robert W. Hughes, with his strong judicial brain, just starting on his path of distinction. There was Patrick Henry Aylett, a descendant of the great orator, and a rising young lawyer. There was Arthur Petticolas, who had an æsthetic touch that gave his dissertations on Art a special charm and value. The *Examiner* under Daniel was a free lance: it made things lively for all sorts of readers.
>
> Mr. Poe naturally found his way thereto as literary editor. He had already attained celebrity as a writer whose prose and poetry was unlike those of all other persons. The reading public was watching him expectantly, looking for greater things. There was about him something that drew especial notice. His face was one of the saddest ever seen. His step was gentle, his voice soft, yet clear; his presence altogether winning. Though unlike in most particulars, Poe and Daniel affiliated in dealing with a world in which sin and folly on the one hand provoked their wrath and scorn, and on the other appealed to their pity and helpfulness.
>
> That Mr. Poe was battling with tragic threatenings at this time, now seems pretty clear. The literary public of Richmond knew enough of him to elicit a profound interest in his behalf. . . .[910]

Mr. John M. Daniel was the same "electric battery" with whom, only the Summer before, Mr. Poe had been on the verge of fighting a duel.

Most of the August days of 1849 must have been spent at the office of the *Examiner*. Judge Robert W. Hughes tells of Poe sitting hour after hour revising his poems, and having them set up in the composing room for reference. On the proofs which were then taken, Poe made corrections and alterations. Only two poems were published at the time, *The Raven* in its final form, and *Dream-Land*, but the proofs were afterward put into the hands of Poe's good friend, F. W. Thomas, when he came East as literary editor of the *Inquirer*. Thus the time was spent to advantage, even as the last sands were running out.[911]

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[910] Bishop O. P. Fitzgerald; Harrison, *Biography*, pages 316 to 320, an address made at the University of Virginia; some parts of this are unreliable.

He was much seen upon Broad Street, going to and from the hotel, — forward looking, erect, close buttoned, the haunting poetical face leaving a memorable impression, with the eyes burning, and mystical under the broad brows and the brim of the Panama hat. Many of the old haunts were revisited. The Allan house, of course, was closed to him, but there must have been a heart thrilling walk past the real house of his youth, still unaltered, at Fourteenth Street and Tobacco Alley. The ghosts of Frances Allan and " Pa " were there, and the proud wraith of an orphan boy. These old days haunted the inmost recesses of his brain. Memory with Poe was a passion.

The Hermitage, the old Mayo house, full of lost ghosts and old cherished dreams, where he had once gone with Rob Stanard, and old "Uncle Billy" to gather chinquepins, was now deserted and falling into ruin, a visible symbol of the loss of his youth. One afternoon he went there with Susan Archer Talley:

> On reaching the place our party separated, and Poe and myself strolled slowly about the grounds. I observed that he was unusually silent and preoccupied, and, attributing it to the influence of memories associated with the place, forebore to interrupt him. He passed slowly by the mossy bench called the 'lover's seat,' beneath two aged trees, and remarked, as we turned toward the garden, 'There used to be white violets here.' Searching amid the tangled wilderness of shrubs, we found a few late blossoms, some of which he placed carefully between the leaves of a notebook. Entering the deserted house, he passed from room to room with a grave, abstracted look, and removed his hat, as if involuntarily, on entering the salon, where in old times many a brilliant company had assembled. Seated in one of the deep windows, over which now grew masses of ivy, his memory must have borne him back to former scenes, for he repeated the familiar lines of Moore:
>
> 'I feel like one
> Who treads alone
> Some banquet hall deserted,'
>
> and paused with the first expression of real sadness I had ever seen on his face. The light of the setting sun shone through the drooping

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[911] J. H. Whitty, *Memoir,* gives the best account of Poe's work at the *Examiner* at this time.

> ivy-boughs into the ghostly rooms, and the tattered and mildewed paper-hangings, with their faded tracery of rose garlands, waved fitfully in the autumn breeze. *An inexpressibly eerie feeling came over me. . . .*[912]

The overpowering effect of such reveries, and the melancholy mood that suddenly overwhelmed him was noticeable to all during this final interlude, even when mixing in the gay society of those days, and in the circles he best knew.

For a while he would stand exchanging repartees with all his old pleasure; his face would light up as some old friend approached, and as time went on he began to lose the haunted and haggard look, and the reserve of hauteur and cold civility. The men whom he knew he greeted cordially, and his old Byronic air with women now returned, mixed with a quixotic reverence that was found delightful. He was often seen laughing and talking with young people — then suddenly — as if he felt it all to be a dream — a melancholy would fall upon him and he would retire to sit alone or to wander with a solitary friend through the garden, talking musically of vanished days. His personality left an indelible impression upon all. He was a figure that seemed to personify poetic fame, speaking with a modulated voice of things fit to be rapt in poetic numbers. " Here is something to be remembered," thought those who walked with him. The world, which forgets so easily, went on record as being impressed. It was this living human quality that friends afterward insisted upon talking about, that they tried to preserve for those to follow. And it is just *that* which we must miss in all that has been written about the man, that no one now can ever really know.

By the beginning of September, he was once more in the good graces of Mrs. Shelton, and sometime shortly before September 5 they became engaged to be married, for on that date he writes to Mrs. Clemm, still at Fordham, plainly indicating that the engagement had definitely taken place.

> . . . And now, my own precious Muddy, the very moment I get a definite answer about everything I will write again and tell you what to do. Elmira talks about visiting Fordham, but I do not know whether

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[912] S. A. Weiss, *Scribner's Magazine*, vol. XV, 5, page 712, March, 1878.

> that would do. I think, perhaps, it would be best for you to give up everything there and come on here in the Packet. Write immediately and give me your advice about it, for you know best. Could we be happier in Richmond or Lowell? for I suppose we could never be happy at Fordham, and Muddy, I *must* be somewhere where I can see Annie. . . .[913]

He could not forget Mrs. Richmond. A little later in the same letter he returns to the same theme and says, " we could easily pay off what we owe at Fordham, but I want to live *near Annie*. . . . I got a sneaking letter today from Chivers. Do not tell me anything about Annie. I cannot bear to hear it now — unless you can tell me that Mr. (Richmond) is dead — I have got the wedding ring, and shall have no difficulty, I think, in getting a dress coat." So, at the last, it *was* Annie after all. But Mr. Richmond, after the obstinate manner of husbands, survived Poe, who was also worried as to how he was going to appear at his wedding to Elmira without a dress coat. It was certainly a difficult world!

In the meantime, poor " Muddie " at Fordham had nearly starved to death. She did not have enough money to get into town to make the rounds of her friends. Since the last of June she had received $1 from Poe. He had none to send her. There were promises and hopes. Mr. St. Leon Loud had called at the *Examiner*, and offered Poe $100 to edit his wife's poems. She was a Philadelphian poetess, — " Of course I accepted . . . the whole labor will not occupy me three days . . ." but this brought no bread into the cottage at Fordham, where " Muddie " now waited, alone with her memories. On August 27, she had been forced to appeal to Griswold in a piteous letter for a " small sum," — " Indeed I *have* suffered." A week went by and she wrote again. By this time she was back again living with Mrs. Lewis in Brooklyn. Griswold was elusive. He had already written a letter to Poe, promising to accept the commission to edit his works in case of Poe's sudden death.[914]

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[913] *Griswold*, Prof. Woodberry, 1909, publishes, vol. 2, pages 329, 330, complete available text.

[914] Mrs. Clemm's condition is known from two of her letters to Griswold, one from Fordham, August 27, 1849, and the other New York, September 4, 1849, both in *Griswold*, published by Woodberry, 1909, vol. 2, pages 323–325.

Meanwhile, in Richmond, time was getting on, while Israfel was spending his last few hours with Lenore upon the edge of the world. It was as if, for a while, the traveler had emerged upon a happy plateau at sunset, and walked with renewed confidence to the edge of the gulf. Early in September, Mrs. Shelton left for the country on a brief visit, while Poe remained in town. All the little last appearances of the man were now remembered, and afterward set down with the peculiar care and atmosphere of importance that last happenings inevitably assume. One catches final glimpses of him going about of evenings, calling on his old friends, as the darkness began to fall.

On September 3, he called at the Strobias, and on September 4, on his old sweetheart Catherine Potiaux. She had refused to see him the year before. Now he came into the room where she was sitting, saying, "Old friend, you see I *would* not be denied!" Catherine was Frances Allan's god-child. Poe and she had climbed apple trees together in long vanished gardens, and she had written him his first "love letter." [915] He stayed only a few minutes, and then rose to go. A shade seemed to fall upon his face — "such as I had never before seen save on the face of the dying." "When shall I see you again?" asked the startled woman. Looking at her, he repeated the words of *The Raven,* and was gone.

At Sanxey's old book store (where he had met Thomas Bolling in 1829, and talked over adventures with the newly printed *Al Aaraaf* in his hand), J. W. Rudolph, who now kept the place, remembered Poe as he dropped in one day to browse, and how he inquired if old Sanxey, who, in other days, had loaned him many a volume, was still alive. Hearing that Sanxey was too feeble to go out, he delighted the old heart by paying a call. There were also calls at the Lamberts, and the Bernards, relatives of Thomas White and Frances Allan.[916]

Before Elmira returned, he went to deliver a lecture at Norfolk, probably leaving Richmond on Saturday, September 8. At Norfolk, he called upon some friends, the Ingrams, and made himself especially agreeable to Miss Susan, the younger daughter of the house. As the custom then was, a party was organized, and Poe with several others went over to take Sunday dinner at the hotel on the beach at Old Point Comfort. Over half a century later, Miss Ingram still vividly recalled the scene.

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[915] Published Vol. I, Chapter V, page 73.

[916] J. H. Whitty, *Memoir, Collected Poems,* large edition, page lxxxii. Mr. Whitty also adds some information of Miss Potiaux, page lxxxi.

It was a warm September night and the little company, consisting mostly of young folks, sat on the beach talking quietly. There were Poe, a young collegian, the girls, and Susan's aunt by way of chaperone. Behind them loomed the large frame bulk of the old *Hygeia House*. The distant dance music from the hotel orchestra, and bugle calls from Fortress Monroe, came over the moonlit water full of many sad, secret memories for an ex-sergeant major, late of the First United States Artillery:

> Mr. Poe sat there in that quiet way of his which made you feel his presence. After a while my aunt, who was nearer his age, said: 'This seems to be just the time and place for poetry, Mr. Poe.' And it was. We all felt it. The old *Hygeia* stood some distance from the water, but with nothing between it and the ocean. It was moonlight, and the light shone over everything with that undimmed light that it has in the South. There were many persons on the long verandas that surrounded the Hotel, but they seemed remote and far away. Our little party was absolutely cut off from everything except that lovely view of the water shining in the moonlight, and its gentle music borne to us on the soft breeze. Poe felt the influence. How could a poet help it? And when we seconded the request that he recite for us he agreed readily. He recited, *The Raven, Annabel Lee* and last of all *Ulalume* with the last stanza of which he remarked that he feared it might not be intelligible to us, as it was scarcely clear to himself. . . .
>
> We went from Old Point Comfort to our home near Norfolk, and he called on us there, and again I had the pleasure of talking with him. Although I was only a slip of a girl and he what then seemed to me quite an old man, and a great literary one at that, we got on together beautifully. He was one of the most courteous gentlemen I have ever seen, and that gave a great charm to his manner. . . .
>
> I remember one little instance that illustrated how loyal he was to the memory of those that had been kind to him. I was fond of orris root and always had the odor of it about my clothes. One day when we were walking together he spoke of it. 'I like it, too,' he said. 'Do you know what it makes me think of? My adopted mother. Whenever the bureau drawers in her rooms were opened there came from them a whiff

of orris root, and ever since when I smell it I go back to the time when I was a little boy and it brings back thoughts of my mother.'[917]

Perhaps Miss Susan's orris root drew its memory-evoking strength from deeper ground than she knew. On Monday evening after the party, Poe sent his young friend a wistfully charming note enclosing *Ulalume*.

> I have transcribed *Ulalume* with much pleasure, Dear Miss Ingram — as I am sure I would do anything at your bidding. . . . I would endeavor to explain to you what I really meant — or what I fancied I meant, by the poem, if it were not that I remembered Dr. Johnson's bitter and rather just remarks about the folly of explaining what, if worth explanations, would explain itself. . . . Leaving *Ulalume* to its fate, therefore, and in good hands. . . .[917]

One ponders at the perfumed ghost of Frances Allan, little Susan, and *Ulalume*, all recalled by one of the last letters that bore the signature "Edgar A. Poe." It was the last touch of moonlight, that evening by the sea.

Through the week, while at Norfolk, Poe called upon his friends several times. On Friday, September 14, he delivered his lecture in the Norfolk Academy on *The Poetic Principle*. A round of entertainments followed, some of the most brilliant that he had received. For three days, the Norfolk *American Beacon* announced, reported, and praised him to his heart's content. Norfolk was quite a little triumph. "I cleared enough to settle my bill at the *Madison House* with $2 over," he writes Mrs. Clemm from Richmond, September 18, the night after returning — "Elmira has just got home from the country. I spent last evening with her. I think she loves me more devotedly than I ever knew and I cannot help loving her in return."

Everything was coming out all right after all. On Tuesday, he tells Mrs. Clemm he will leave for Philadelphia. A day there will do for Mrs. Loud's poems, then (with the $100 in his pocket) "*possibly* on Thursday I may start for New York." He would go straight over to Mrs. Lewis's, and send out to Fordham for "Muddie." There were too many sorrowful memories for him to go to Fordham now. "It will be better for me not to go — don't you think so?" As yet he could not send Mrs. Clemm even one dollar, although — "the papers here are praising me to death . . . keep up my file of the *Literary World.*" Mrs. Clemm, no doubt, faithful to the last, kept up the file, wondering what she would wear at Eddie's third wedding.

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[917] *New York Herald*, February 19, 1905, article by Miss Susan Ingram.

At the end of September it seemed as if the pleasant, level plateau over which his feet had for a brief time carried him, sloped suddenly. Down it he walked unusually confident. There was a brief acceleration of human events, a whirl of delirious horror at the edge of the gulf, and then —

On the twenty-second of September he spent the evening at Mrs. Shelton's. All was happily arranged. The marriage was set for October 17. He was especially happy, for Elmira had consented to write to Mrs. Clemm, which she now did. For a moment it seemed as if all the story might end with the old fairy tale formula. Poe had given Elmira a large cameo brooch, from which she would never afterward be parted. After Edgar left, she sat down and wrote to Mrs. Clemm.

Richmond, *Sept. 22nd,* 1849

MY DEAR MRS. CLEMM, — You will no doubt be much surprised to receive a letter from one whom you have never seen, although I feel as if I were writing to one whom I love very devotedly, and whom to *know* is to *love*. . . . Mr. Poe has been very solicitous that I should write to you, and I do assure you, it is with emotions of pleasure that I now do so. I am fully prepared to *love* you, and I do sincerely hope that our spirits may be congenial. There shall be nothing wanting on my part to make them so.

I have just spent a very happy evening with your dear Edgar, and I know it will be gratifying to you to know that he is all that you could desire him to be, sober, temperate, moral, & much beloved. He showed me a letter of yours, in which you spoke affectionately of me, and for which I feel very much gratified & complimented. . . . Edgar speaks frequently & very affectionately of your daughter & his Virginia, for which I love him but the more. I have a very dear friend (to whom I am much attached) by the name of *Virginia Poe*. She is a lovely girl in character, tho' not as beautiful in person as your beloved one.

I remember seeing Edgar, & his lovely wife, very soon after they were married. . . . It is needless (I know) for me to ask you to take good care of him when he is (as I trust he soon will be) again restored to your arms.

'I trust a kind Providence' will protect him and guide him in the way of truth, so that his feet slip not. I hope, my dear friend, that you will write to me, and as Edgar will perhaps reach you as soon as this does, he will direct your letter.

It has struck 12 o'clock, and I am encroaching on the Sabbath, and will therefore conclude. 'Good night, Dear friend,' may Heaven bless you and shield you, and may your remaining days on earth be peaceful and happy. . . .

Thus prays your attached tho' unknown friend

ELMIRA [918]

Poe's trip back North was to close the cottage at Fordham, certainly to see Griswold, who had undertaken to edit the *Collected Works,* and to bring "Muddie" back to Richmond for the marriage. His last movements in Richmond can be confidently traced.

On Monday, September 24, he delivered his final lecture, again on *The Poetic Principle,* before an audience of friends who had now, hearing rumors of his engagement, and guessing his necessity, gathered in considerable numbers at the *Exchange Hotel* "with a view to giving him pecuniary assistance in a delicate way . . . there was a touch of old Virginia in the way this was done." At this lecture, from various accounts, it would seem that a decent sum must have been raised. It was sufficient at least for him to start North to get Mrs. Clemm.[919]

The next afternoon (Tuesday the twenty-sixth) he spent at Talavera with his old friends the Talleys, where he told his future biographer, Susan Talley (Mrs. Weiss), that his trip to Richmond had been the happiest experience of many years, and that when he finally left New York to come South, he would feel that he was shaking off the dust of the trouble and vexation of his past life. "On no occasion had I seen him so cheerful and hopeful as upon this evening." He sat chatting to the Talleys in the sitting-room, avoiding a party of guests in the parlors to have a few last words

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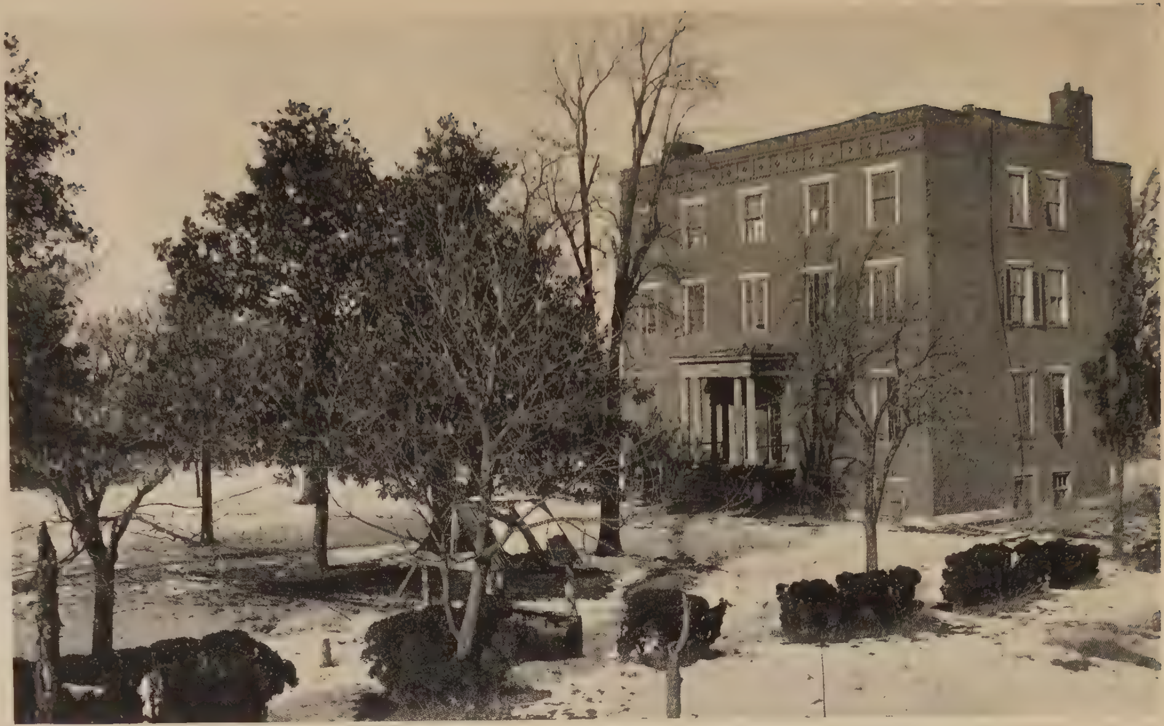
[918] Mrs. Shelton to Mrs. Clemm, September 22, 1849. Harrison, vol. 2 (from manuscript belonging to Miss A. F. Poe).

[919] Bishop O. P. Fitzgerald says $1500, but this is evidently wrong. Mrs. Weiss corrects this statement. The amount was probably helpful but small. There are also *rumors* that Mrs. Shelton gave Poe money to go North, and to return. He "borrowed" $5 from Thompson the day before he left Richmond.

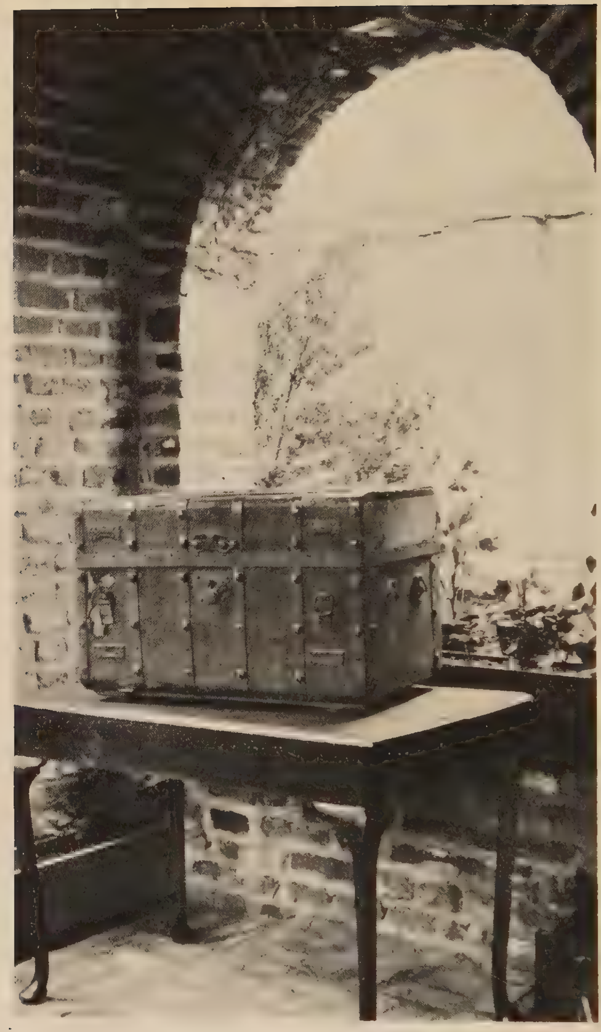


Duncan Lodge

The Home of the Mackenzies, foster-parents of Rosalie Poe and friends of the Poet

Duncan Lodge, named for Mary Duncan, was on Broad Street, just above old Richmond College and "Belleville"

From a photograph. Courtesy of the Edgar Allan Poe Shrine, Richmond, Virginia



Poe's Trunk and Boot Hooks

Courtesy of the Poe Shrine

with his intimate friends. He was sorry to have to leave Richmond at all, he said, but he would certainly be back again in two weeks. He begged them to write to him while he was away. The other guests left slowly. Poe remained, hating to cut the thread. His hostess and her daughters went to the door with him to say a final goodbye. To the very last, all accidents with him were weirdly consistent — none of them ever forgot the one that followed:

> We were standing in the portico, and after going a few steps he paused, turned, and again lifted his hat in a last adieu. At that moment a brilliant meteor appeared in the sky directly over his head, and vanished. . . .[920]

Poe went to Duncan Lodge where he spent the night, depressed and thoughtful, smoking in the open window of his room. The next morning he had his trunk packed, and carried down to the *Swan Tavern*. As it was being carried out of the house, a lamp was broken, and Rosalie remarked to Mrs. Mackenzie that no complaint should be made as it was broken by a poet.[921] It was the last time that Poe slept beneath the mercifully sheltering roof of Duncan Lodge. Mrs. Mackenzie continued to shelter Rose. The trunk, " most of his estate," was a small black leather one, bound with iron hoops, and containing manuscripts, and a few other belongings. Its subsequent history was curious.[922] Dr. Gibbon Carter, and Dr. Mackenzie accompanied him to town.

Wednesday, September 26, Poe spent about Richmond with his friends. He called upon Thompson of the *Messenger,* who advanced him $5, and, as he left, Poe turned to him and said, " By the way, you have been very kind to me, — here is a little trifle that may be worth something to you." He then handed Thompson a small roll of paper with *Annabel Lee* written on it in his beautiful script. Poe passed the rest of the day with some of his friends about town. During the afternoon, Miss Susan Talley was visited by Rosalie, bearing a note from Poe in which he enclosed the lines *For Annie*. Towards evening he went to Church Hill for a final call upon Elmira. At this interview he appeared very sad, and Mrs. Shelton said *he complained of being quite sick*. She felt his pulse, and found him to be distinctly feverish, and she did not think him able to travel next morning.[923]

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[920] Mrs. Weiss, also quoted by Gill, Chatto & Windus, 1878, page 231. Mrs. Weiss was not superstitious, and says that after the incident they " laughed." The story is undoubtedly true, and one of the dramatic circumstances that seemed to haunt Poe.

[921] Edward V. Valentine to the author in Richmond in May, 1926. From an item contributed by a lady who was present at the Mackenzies' when Poe left, (in Mr. Valentine's diary).

[922] For the history of this trunk now at the Edgar Allan Poe Shrine, Richmond, Virginia, see the *Valentine Museum Poe Letters,* edited by Mary Newton Stanard, page 179.

Walking along Broad Street on his way back from Mrs. Shelton's, he stopped in at Dr. John Carter's office where he read the newspaper and left, taking, by mistake, the doctor's Malacca cane and leaving his own. He went across the street to *Sadler's Restaurant*, a well-known place of entertainment in Richmond, which informed its customers by way of a slogan that "Thirteen old gentlemen were made sick by eating Turtle Soup at Sadler's." Here Poe met J. M. Blakey, and some other acquaintances. The party was a cheerful one, conversation went on to a late hour, and was joined in by the host, Mr. Sadler. Poe it was said appeared cheerful himself and was sober.

Judge Hughes of Richmond afterward said that both Sadler and Blakey told him they distinctly remembered meeting Poe at the restaurant that night, and that they did not think he was drinking. He was talking of going North, and when they saw him last, shortly before his departure, they were certain he was quite sober.[924]

Some of the party accompanied Poe to the wharf, and saw him off. The boat left for Baltimore at four o'clock on the morning of September 27, 1849. Next morning Elmira, who was uneasy about him, came down town to look him up. She was surprised to find that he had gone so suddenly, and recorded her anxiety. Thus Lenore was left in Richmond, while Israfel proceeded rapidly toward the edge of the world.

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[923] Mrs. Shelton to Mrs. Clemm. Letter in the Poe-Chivers papers, quoted from Prof. Woodberry, 1909, vol. 2, page 341.

[924] J. H. Whitty prints this information in his *Memoir* to the *Complete Poems*.

CHAPTER XXVII

An Appeal to Higher Authority

THE steamer for Baltimore continued on its way. It was then a voyage of about forty-eight hours from Richmond with many stops. Several things might have happened on the route, and on most steamboats at that time there was a bar forward, for the refreshment of gentlemen travelers. The contingencies will bear being kept in mind.[925]

There is little doubt that, when he left Richmond, Poe was once more approaching one of his periods of collapse. The usual symptoms of great depression, amounting almost to melancholia, had been noted by many as he took his leave, and Elmira noticed that he had a feverish pulse.[923] It was probably the heart again. He had been quite active for some time, and was laboring under considerable excitement over the move South, and his approaching marriage. Under the circumstances, an attack was due. His sudden departure at four A.M., surprising Elmira, seems to show that, even at the time of leaving Richmond, he was a bit irrational.[926] What happened at *Sadler's,* or what took place on the boat, it is impossible to be sure about. Poe was in that peculiar condition, a physical dilemma in fact, that few who have discussed his failings seem to realize, *i.e., his failing heart required a stimulant which*

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[925] Steamers stopped by signal from plantation wharfs. Poe may have changed to the Norfolk-Baltimore steamer at Old Point Comfort. From a contemporary map (1850) in the writer's possession, the steamboat route from Richmond to Baltimore was by way of Eppe's Island, Windmill Point, Powhatan, Sandy Point, Hog Island, Day's Point, Old Point Comfort, Rappahanoc River, Smith's Point, Point Lookout, Patuxent River, Cove Point, Sharp's Island, Herring Bay, Annapolis, Sandy Point, North Point, Baltimore (Map, tables 3 and 5). In 1815, the round trip, steamboat, from Baltimore to Norfolk, required a week. In 1820, the time was cut to twenty hours; by 1840 it required thirteen or fourteen, where it remained for some time. The trip to Richmond from Baltimore in 1849 must have taken at least forty-eight hours with stops. See *Steamboat Days* by F. E. Dayton.

[926] Woodberry shows conclusively that Poe's departure from Richmond at 4 A.M. was somewhat of a whim.

would be disastrous to his brain. So far, largely through the good fortune of falling into the hands of friends, and of a latent power of recovery, he had survived. His strength was now exhausted, and Dr. Carter had warned him that one more lapse would bring on a fatal attack. He ventured to overstep the mark, and this time he did not fall into the hands of friends. The result was, as had been medically predicted, fatal.

When, or how he took the drink is a futile discussion. There is no doubt that he did. An attack, such as that which he had experienced at Philadelphia with similar delirium, ensued. The chronicle of the next few days is consequently involved in the lurid mists of confusion.

The steamer landed at Baltimore, probably during the forenoon of Saturday, September 29. What now happened must be pieced out, if possible, by the most plausible conjectures available, made by those familiar with the locality and its customs. We know that Poe was ostensibly upon his way to Philadelphia where he expected to revise Mrs. St. Leon Loud's poems for a fee of $100. It also seems that, on passing through Baltimore, he expected to call upon some of his friends, for he actually attempted to do so. The trains for Philadelphia left at nine A.M., and eight P.M., and there would therefore have been several hours to wait. If Poe went to a hotel, he would most naturally have chosen the *United States Hotel,* then just opposite the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Station, or possibly old *Bradshaw's* near by.[927] Whether he did so, is not known. Sometime during the day he called at the residence of his friend, Dr. Nathan C. Brooks, at which time he was said to have been intoxicated. A void of five days then took place in his history, about which nothing certain can ever be ascertained.[928]

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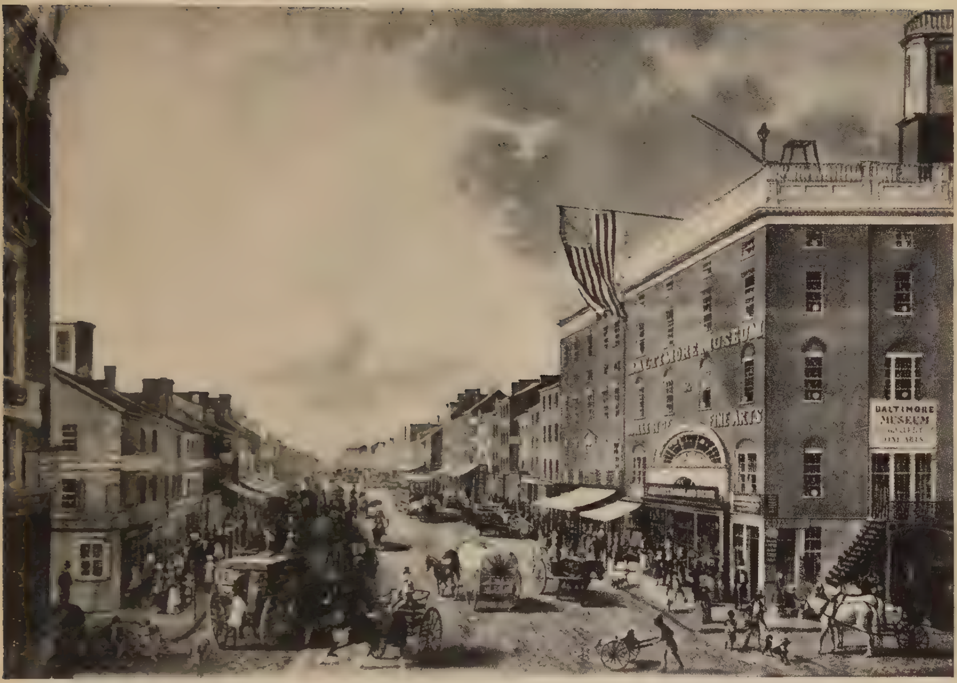
[927] *New York Herald,* March 27, 1881 (Spencer), a discussion of Dr. Snodgrass' *The Facts of Poe's Death and Burial, Beadle's Monthly,* 1867.

[928] Several other stories about Poe's doings during these five days exist. He is said to have taken a train to Philadelphia, and to have been put off at Havre de Grace, Maryland, and sent back (Conductor George Rollins) — evidence second hand and very flimsy. Bishop O. P. Fitzgerald mentions Poe's attending a birthday party, and drinking a toast to the "fair hostess" — certainly apocryphal. The election incident story is not given here as certain, but as the *most possible.* The best discussions are in Woodberry, and Harrison.



Baltimore in 1849

A street scene in the city where Poe died under circumstances of extreme tragedy, and where he now lies buried

From an old print

Courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society

There was an election going on in Baltimore, at the time, for members of Congress and representatives to the State Legislature. The town was notoriously corrupt politically, and terrorized by gangs of hoodlums. Voters were not registered, and anyone who would, or could hold up his hand before a judge of elections, and face the ordeal of a "challenge," was permitted to take the oath. Thus the party which could round up the greatest number of helpless "voters" could win any election. For several days before balloting such helpless unfortunates as political gangs could sandbag or intimidate were "mobilized," and kept docile with drugs and whiskey at various places called "coops." They were then repeatedly voted.

There was an election due in Baltimore on October 3, 1849, and, five days before it began, Poe arrived. He was, therefore, in Baltimore while the "campaign" for voters was going on. That he was, when in an already helpless condition, seized upon and "cooped," is not only quite a possible but by far the most probable explanation of what happened. The reasons for supposing so follow:[929]

On High Street, in the rear of an old engine-house, there was a Whig "coop," notorious as the "Fourth Ward Club." It is said that in 1849 there were imprisoned there between 130 and 140 "voters." Poe was found, upon election day, within two squares of this place at *Cooth & Sergeant's Tavern* in Lombard Street, near High Street. From now on we are once more dealing with witnesses and facts.

On October 3, 1849, James E. Snodgrass, M. D.,[547] an old friend of Poe, who lived at 103 High Street within about two blocks of *Cooth & Sergeant's Tavern*, received a note scrawled in pencil that read:

Baltimore City, 3*d*, 1849

DEAR SIR,—There is a gentleman, rather the worse for wear, at Ryan's 4th ward polls, who goes under the cognomen of Edgar A. Poe, and who appears in great distress, and he says he is acquainted with you, and I assure you he is in need of immediate assistance.

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[929] The author examined various files of the Baltimore newspapers for October, 1849, at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore in May, 1926, also various pamphlets dealing with hospitals and church homes in Baltimore, for some of the facts given in this chapter. Directories of the day were also consulted.

Yours in haste,
To Dr. J. E. Snodgrass Jos. W. Walker [930]

Dr. Snodgrass recognized the signature as that of a compositor on the *Baltimore Sun* whom he knew slightly.[931] It is evident that Walker recognized Poe as a *gentleman* in the wrong surroundings, and sent the note to Snodgrass, because Poe knew him, and because he (the Doctor) lived near, and was a medical man.

Dr. Snodgrass hastened through the rainy, chill October weather to the tavern, where he found Poe in the bar-room, sitting helpless in an arm chair, surrounded by ruffians.

> His face was haggard, not to say bloated, and unwashed, his hair unkempt and his whole physique repulsive. His expansive forehead . . . and those full-orbed and mellow, yet soulful eyes for which he was so noticeable when himself, now lusterless as shortly I could see, were shaded from view by a rusty, almost brimless, tattered and ribbonless palm leaf hat. His clothing consisted of a sack-coat of thin and sleezy black alpaca, ripped more or less at intervals of its seams, and faded and soiled, and pants of a steel-mixed pattern of cassinett, half worn and badly fitting, if they could be said to fit at all. He wore neither vest nor neck cloth, while the bosom of his shirt was both crumpled and badly soiled. . . .[932]

Dr. Snodgrass, at first, tried to get a private room for Poe at the "tavern," but while this was being prepared, with confusion and delay, Mr. Herring, Poe's cousin, arrived.[933] After some consultation, it was decided that Poe had better be taken to the Washington Hospital. A carriage was sent for, and the dying man was carried to the conveyance, still grasping Dr. Carter's Malacca cane that he had brought by mistake from Richmond. The unconscious, but still muttering wreck of a great poet was now drawn by horses through the streets of Baltimore, and delivered at the Washington Hospital into the hands of the physician on duty, Dr. J. J. Moran, at the hour of five P.M. This was on Wednesday, October 3.

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[930] The version of the note given here is a copy from the original. See Harrison, *Biography,* pages 327–328. This note has been frequently misquoted, due to Dr. Snodgrass's garbled version. Note copied by W. Hand Brown for Prof. Harrison.

[931] J. W. Walker, printer, was afterward drowned, so no further evidence from him appears.

[932] The account here is taken from *The Facts of Poe's Death and Burial*, by J. E. Snodgrass, M.D., in *Beadle's Monthly*, pages 283 to 288 (1867), original text furnished by John T. Snyder, Esq. The author is aware of the doubtful elements in part of this story, written eighteen years later, but, as Dr. Snodgrass *was present,* his testimony is that of a direct witness, the only one available. The fact that the Doctor's memory of dates failed him, does not vitiate his memory of Poe's appearance, and the events. Note that Poe wore a "planter's" hat in Richmond, and still had the wreck of it as described by Dr. Snodgrass.

[933] How he was informed does not appear. That he was informed is evident.

Poe remained unconscious until three o'clock next morning. The mercy of oblivion was then withdrawn. Drenched in perspiration, with shaking limbs, pale, and talking constantly in a " busy but not violent or active delirium, the whole chamber seethed for him, and with vacant converse he talked to the spectres that withered and loomed on the walls."

Dr. Moran was now called in, and endeavored to obtain some information about where he lived, and his relatives. " But his answers were incoherent and unsatisfactory." He told the physician that he had a wife in Richmond, doubtless thinking of Elmira. Sometime during the day Neilson Poe called, but could not be allowed to see his cousin. Changes of linen, and all comforts were sent him. The Poe and Herring relatives left nothing lacking.

Seeing that he was a gentleman, the doctor had Poe placed in a room not far from the living quarters of his family, and the bedside of the sufferer was visited by the physician's wife, Mrs. Mary O. Moran.

The key to his trunk was found in his clothes, but he could not remember what had become of the trunk. He seems to have left it at the *Old Swan Tavern* in Richmond. Dr. Moran, seeing his case was hopeless, strove to cheer him by telling him that in a few days " he would be able to rejoin the society of his friends." The thought seems to have maddened the patient instead of soothing him, for he " broke out with much energy and said the best thing his best friend could do would be to blow out his miserable brains with a pistol — that when he beheld his miserable degradation he was ready to sink into the earth." All that he had lost must now have flashed upon him in " concentrated despair." Worn out, he dozed, — when the doctor returned a little later two nurses were struggling to keep him in bed. A demon worse than all that he had imagined, tormented him in a long and violent delirium.

It went on for days. Neither Mrs. Clemm nor Annie knew. They did not come. In the desperate struggles and agonies of remorse, what was left of him was worn away. Dr. Moran's wife, hearing he was quiet at last, came down the passage from the wing where she kept house, to take down his last directions, thinking he had something tangible to leave.

He asked her if there was any hope. She replied, thinking he meant, hope for recovery, that her husband thought him a very ill man. He then said, " I meant hope for a wretch like me beyond this life." She tried to comfort him, " with the words of the Great Physician," and read him the fourteenth chapter of *St. John.* Wiping the beads of perspiration from his brow, she smoothed his pillow, gave him a soothing draught, and departed to make his shroud. What Poe thought no one will ever know. Nothing less heartrending can truthfully be said, than that the death of Israfel was more painful than his life.

He lived from Wednesday, the third, to the Sunday following. On Saturday night he began to dream of the past. It would be grateful to record, or to suppose that he sank back into the sunny valley of his childhood, and saw Mrs. Stanard again, that he wandered in gardens with little Rob and Elmira, or that Frances Allan might have come to his bedside, as she used, to soothe his troubled sleep. But we know this was not what happened. Nothing was spared him.

On the last night, as the shadow fell across him, it must have been the horrors of shipwreck, of thirst, and of drifting away into unknown seas of darkness [934] that troubled his last dreams, for, by some trick of his ruined brain, it was the scenes of *Arthur Gordon*

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[934] J. N. Reynolds connected with a project for the exploration of the South Polar Seas. Poe was interested in this in Richmond during the time he was on the *Messenger* there, and writing *Arthur Gordon Pym.* He may have had interviews with Reynolds in New York, where *Pym* was published in 1838. See also Poe's review of J. N. Reynolds' pamphlet, *South Sea Expedition,* in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for January, 1837. See note 503 and context, this text.

Pym that rose in his imagination, and the man who was connected most intimately with them. " Reynolds! " he called, " Reynolds! Oh, Reynolds! " The room rang with it. It echoed down the corridors hour after hour all that Saturday night. The last grains of sand uncovered themselves as they slipped away, during the Sunday morning of October 7, 1849. He was now too feeble to call out any more. It was three o'clock in the morning and the earth's shadow was still undisturbed by dawn.

He became quiet, and seemed to rest for a short time. Then, gently moving his head he said, " Lord help my poor soul."

APPENDICES

I

NOTES ON POE'S ANCESTRY

PATERNAL

EDGAR (ALLAN) POE'S ancestry, on his father's side, was Scotch-Irish, and can be traced back into the Parish of Fenwick in Ayrshire, Scotland, where there were intermarriages with some of the remote ancestors of the Allans and Galts. The Poes belonged to the Protestant Scotch who went to Ireland. There is some indication that their name is one of the variants of Powell, Powr, Power, etc. All attempts to be dogmatic about the immediate ancestry of the poet, prior to the early Eighteenth Century, must be regarded as whimsically doubtful.

By about 1745, there are some genuine documents and records to be traced, with authentic mention of the Poes about Dring, in the Parish of Kildallen, County Cavon, Ireland. Here one *David Poe* (great-great-grandfather) of the poet, departed this vale of tears shortly before August, 1742, leaving a will containing considerable theological sophistry, and some tangible biological records. Upon his wife, Sarah, he had begotten, in the order named, Alexander, John, and Anna.

Alexander Poe came to America about 1739, and settled at Marsh Creek, near the present Gettysburg Battlefield in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He prospered, and must have written home to brother *John Poe,* still in Ireland, and now married to Jane McBride. *John Poe* and Jane McBride Poe, bringing with them two young sons, *David Poe* and George Poe, therefore left Ireland about 1748, or a little earlier (date not certain) and landing at Newcastle, Delaware, at first went to settle in Pennsylvania. John Poe and Jane, his wife, had ten children in their family. It was their son, *David Poe,* who was the poet's grandfather. This *David Poe* lived in Pennsylvania where he married a Miss Elizabeth Cairnes, whose family also hailed from Ireland, but had been living in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Sometime prior to the outbreak of the American Revolution, *David Poe* and his wife Elizabeth moved to Baltimore where his pursuits were various, ranging from making furniture and spinning-wheels, to driving the British and Tories out of Baltimore. In 1778 he was appointed as " Assistant Deputy Quartermaster " of the Continental forces, which meant that he was a purchasing agent for the Revolutionary Army. He is said to have been of great assistance to La Fayette (I have not been able to trace the sources except for some minor mention that tends to confirm the tradition). His services caused him to be spoken of as " General." From 1790 on, there is no difficulty in tracing him. The Federal Census of 1790 shows David Poe to have owned four slaves, to have had nine " free white males " in his household (four under 16 years of age), and two free white females. By the aid of old Baltimore directories, he can now be traced as follows:

About 1800 — 173 West Baltimore Street, — Store and Residence
" 1807 17 Camden Street, Fish Inspector
" 1810 19 Camden Street, [number probably changed (?)]
" 1812 Park Lane
October 19, 1816 — Death notices.

This brief sketch of the poet's grandfather, David Poe, in many respects a remarkable man, must end here, except to note that he had by his wife Elizabeth Cairnes seven children. Three only, of these seven, concern us:

1. *David Poe* (eldest son, father of Edgar)
2. Maria Poe (afterward Mrs. Maria Clemm) *aunt and mother-in-law* of Edgar Poe, the poet.
3. Eliza Poe (afterward Mrs. Henry Herring)

David Poe, the poet's father married a widow, Mrs. Elizabeth Hopkins (born Arnold), and had three children:

William Henry Leonard Poe (no issue)
Edgar Poe — (the poet) (no issue)
Rosalie Poe (no issue)

Note: To avoid confusion, all account of collateral relatives springing from *brothers of the poet's grandfather, David Poe,* are here omitted.

MATERNAL

Trace of Poe's ancestry, on the maternal side, is to be found in play bills and pamphlets, not readily obtainable in America, of the Drury Lane Theatre, London, and in the records of St. George's Parish, London. The maternal great-grandfather of the poet was *William Smith,* an actor of some repute, and occasional flattering mention. His daughter, *Elizabeth Smith,* married *Henry Arnold,* the son of one William Henry Arnold, author of some comedies produced at the Drury Lane about the end of the Eighteenth Century. The brother of William Henry Arnold, James Arnold, became manager of the Drury Lane Theatre in 1812. (*It has not been possible to collect much data on these Arnolds in America. What material has been available, all points to the fact that they were* *persons of considerable executive, literary, and histrionic talents. Names and dates were checked by a friend of the author from old play bills and pamphlets in England.*)

Henry Arnold and *Elizabeth Arnold* (born Smith) were the maternal grandparents of Edgar Allan Poe. From Church Records at St. George's, London, where many " theatrical marriages " were performed, it appears that the couple were married about June, 1784. Sometime in the Spring of 1787 (*Ingram*), a daughter was born to them, baptized " Elizabeth." *Elizabeth Arnold* was the mother of Edgar Allan Poe.

Henry Arnold's name, the author is informed by an English correspondent, disappears from the play bills about 1783 (sic). He appears to have died, leaving his widow with the young *Elizabeth* Poe to support. Her mother (Poe's maternal grandmother) acted at the Covent Garden Theatre Royal, London, and appears on the play bills there of the 1790s, as a singer. Early in 1796, taking the young Elizabeth (Poe's mother) with her, she came to America, and landed at Boston. Either before, or immediately after her arrival in the United States, she married a Mr. Charles Tubbs who acted (danced?), and played the pianoforte. The appearances of Mr. and Mrs. Tubbs, and of the young Elizabeth Arnold from 1796 on, can be plainly traced in old American play bills at Boston, Portland, Newport, Rhode Island, New York, Charleston, South Carolina, etc., etc., and in the dramatic notices in the newspapers of the time. (Professor Woodberry gives a nearly complete list of Miss Arnold's, Mrs. Poe's, appearances from 1796 to 1811.)

In August, 1802, *Elizabeth Arnold* married an actor by the name of C. D. Hopkins; apparently an American. C. D. Hopkins died October 26, 1805, leaving his widow, *Elizabeth Arnold Hopkins,* childless. In January, 1806, the widow, *Elizabeth Arnold Hopkins,* married *David Poe,* an actor in the same company with her. There were born of this union three children:

William Henry Leonard Poe — Boston, 1807.
Edgar (*Allan*) *Poe* — Boston, January 29, 1809.
Rosalie Poe — Norfolk, December 10, 1810?

The last date entered in the Mackenzie Bible is not certain, nor is Rosalie's parentage.

Mrs. David Poe (Elizabeth Arnold) died in Richmond, Sunday December 8, 1811, and was buried at ten o'clock Tuesday, December 10, at St. John's Episcopal Church, in Richmond, Virginia, where she now lies in an unmarked grave. Of her three children, all were childless.

II

THE following miscellaneous items deal with the early Richmond days of Poe's childhood, or the trip of the Allans to England from 1815 to 1820.

ONE

Letter from John Allan's niece Mary Fowlds at Kilmarnock, Scotland, to John Allan, Esq., at 47 *Southampton Row, London:*

Kilmarnock, 11*th Nov.* 1815

MY DEAR UNCLE —

I observed by your letter to Father that you were extremely fond I should have a sweetheart. I think they would only be lumber at present but I don't intend to be an old maid the more of that but when my education is over then will I make a bold push and see what I can do. I hope Miss Valentine has got a beau to make a husband of by this time as she is in the Capitol. I suppose they will be as the midges in a summers' evening and when she is served herself I hope she will send down a gross or two as they are a scarce commodity here and she may rely upon the thanks of all the ladies in Kilmarnock. I must finish this love story. Hope Mrs. Allan has got quite well again and able to go about and see all the curiosities as I understand they are great in number. We are often wondering how you are all coming on indeed when we are all met together at night (as you know I am always engaged at school through the day) you generally engross part of our conversation. We dined and spent the evening at Mrs. Fowlds (grandmother) on Halloween and according to the custom of Scotland we burnt our nuts and pulled our stocks. I was just making the observation had you been here you would have enjoyed (it) highly. We are all pretty well at present. My mother was engaged in making puddings yesterday and while she was filling the skins she was just saying how happy she would be if you would all come in on her and assist in eating them. I have no news to give you — the people here are just as you left them. All the family join me in love to you, Mrs. Allan, Miss Valentine and little Edgar (*Poe*). I am my Dear Uncle your affectionate niece. I shall be hoping to hear from you soon.

MARY FOWLDS

The above letter fixes the address of the Allans at 47 Southampton Row, London, as early as November, 1815, and the fact that young Poe was then in London. *From Galt-Allan correspondence, courtesy of E. V. Valentine, Esq.*

TWO

(a) Allan Fowlds addresses a letter to John Allan "at 47 Southampton Row, Near Russell Square, London," from Kilmarnock, Scotland, May 27, 1817.

(b) Mary Allan writes to her brother, John Allan, from Troon, Scotland, August 22, 1817, addressing him at "18 Basing Hall, London."

(c) *Unpublished portion of a letter quoted in the text, Jane Galt to Mary Allan:*

Damlish, *Oct.* 24, 1818

MY DEAR MARY

Mrs. Allan intended to have wrote herself to day but is very Weak. — ? and is afraid she will feel too much fatigued to write. We leave this on Monday for Sidmouth where Mrs. Elwell proposes staying two days we will let you know from there what day we shall have the pleasure of seeing you in Southhampton Row. Mrs. Allan seems to dread very much the returning to London as she will enter it about the first of November (See text, Chapter V, note 127).

(d) In a letter to John Allan at Richmond, Virginia, Mary Allan writes from Kilmarnock, March 24, 1815.

. . . by your letter to Mrs. Fowlds I am sorry to read that Mrs. Allan had been so indisposed. I hope by this time she is quite well and that her face will not be injured by the fracture. . . .

This accident to Mrs. Allan seems to have delayed the trip of the family to England for some months.

THREE

Notices in Old Richmond Newspapers of Mrs. David Poe (*Supplied by E. V. Valentine, Esq.*).

(a) First mention of David and Mrs. Poe as a married couple, in Richmond papers — July, 1806.

(b) Last notice of Mrs. Poe's Richmond benefit. *Patriot*, November 29, 1811. (Last appearance was Tuesday October 8.) (Mrs. Poe died Sunday, December 8, 1811.) Death notice in *Richmond Enquirer* for December 10, 1811, "By the death of this . . ." etc. The *Richmond Patriot* for December 10, 1811, contained a notice of her funeral at ten o'clock.

(c) In 1804, Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Hopkins appeared with David Poe in plays given in Richmond, in an old carriage shop used as a temporary theater, situated just behind what was later the Allan residence at Fifth and Main. (*Hopkins* — Mrs. Poe's first husband.)

Sully

(d) Mrs. Poe (as Mrs. Hopkins) acted with Matthew Sully, brother of the artist, Thomas Sully, in 1803 in Norfolk. The Sullys had just then come over from England. Robert Sully, Poe's friend, was a son of the actor Matthew Sully.

Usher

(e) The name of Usher, as early friends of the Poes, occurs frequently in old play bills. These Ushers appear later to have settled in Baltimore, and to have known the Poes there. In the Baltimore *North American* for Saturday, October 27, 1827, occurs this notice:

> Died . . . On Friday evening, the 12th inst. Elizabeth Usher, daughter of the late Thomas Usher, sen. of the county of Antrim, Ireland, and formerly a merchant of this city.

FOUR

Data concerning Poe's Foster-Mother, Frances Allan

Mrs. Allan (Frances Keeling Valentine) and her sister, Anne Moore Valentine, were early left orphans. At eleven and twelve years of age, respectively, they appeared in Hustings Court, on January 12, 1795, and voluntarily took John Dixon (a Richmond printer, who seems earlier to have had affiliations in Williamsburg on the *Government Gazette*) as guardian. The two girls were brought up by this printer. Frances Valentine married John Allan in 1803. Young Poe was much about the house of John Dixon during boyhood days. Poe's early experience brought him much into contact with printing and bookselling. Ebenezer Burling's father, Thomas Burling, was also a printer. A Richmond correspondent says that John Dixon sheltered Poe from some of the " coarse influences " he was early subjected to.

FIVE

Miscellaneous Legal Notices, etc.

(a) *Richmond Compiler,* April 24, 1832 — sale of John Allan's property on deed of trust, corner of Main and Fifth Streets, Clay Street house, advertised. See Book Number 7, page 580. *Ellis & Allan.*

(b) John Allan elected Secretary of Amiable Society Club. — *Richmond Whig,* November 27, 1830.

(c) Sale of property of *Ellis & Allan,* advertised in *Richmond Compiler* for May 13, 1822. This was bought in by an advance of $10,000 on a note endorsed by William Galt now in the *Ellis & Allan Papers.*

III

THE following correspondence, and legal documents are here appended, in full, as tending to clear up many erroneous and vague statements of years past, concerning the matters with which the letters and wills, here printed, deal. As all of the persons mentioned in the wills, here appended, have long been dead, and the matters to which they relate are almost a century (in some cases more than a century of past date), — the only genuine interest which now attaches to them is purely literary, in so far as they tend to throw light upon the early condition of affairs in Richmond in Poe's boyhood, the persons surrounding him, and the causes of the troubles in the Allan household. The will of John Allan, in particular, is, in itself, a striking comment on the character of Edgar Allan Poe's guardian. It is felt that much of the text, and the construction put upon events in Poe's boyhood, in the earlier part of this biography, will be materially strengthened by thus publishing the chief documents upon which many of the assertions made in the body of the text must, in the final analysis, rely for proof.

For three quarters of a century the character of Edgar Allan Poe has been persistently under a cloud, in regard to his relations with his guardian. The second Mrs. Allan charged Poe with forgery, and he was supposed to have been callously ungrateful for the " tender cherishing " he received at John Allan's hands. Poe, on his part, it must be remembered, must inevitably have known of all the facts here shown, and *more*. The present biographer is in possession of still further facts, casting additional light on still other domestic relations of Poe's guardian which, for reasons at the present, still cogent and delicate, it is not felt advisable to print. The documents printed below are:

One: A letter from Thomas Bolling of " Cobbs " in Chesterfield County, Virginia, to Colonel William Bolling of Bolling Hall in Goochland County, Virginia, dated Richmond, November 29, 1800. This letter is from a Virginia planter of good family who was a customer of William Galt, John Allan's uncle, the founder of the Allan fortune. It is here printed to show the opinion in which William Galt, and Scotch merchants of his type, were held by gentleman planters. It tends to throw a humorous light on the opening sentences of William Galt's Will. The letter is printed by courtesy of the Edgar Allan Poe Shrine, Richmond, Virginia.

Two: Letter from the County Clerk's Office, Goochland, Virginia, to the author.

Three: The Will of William Galt, (*Sr.*)

Four: The Will of John Allan (foster-father of Edgar Allan Poe).

Five: Comments on some legal aspects of John Allan's Will.

One

Richmond, *29th Nov.,* 1800

My Dear Son

Your favor of the 26th Inst. I recd. yesterday inclosing me a draught upon P. P. & Johnston, which I'm sorry to inform you, was rejected, owing to a mistake of Mr. S. Saunder's drawing it upon a 25. stamp when it should have been upon one of 50. the Genl. informs me, that if he will renew it upon a stamp of 50. Cents that they will still pay it on the 10th of next Month. I thank you, for the attention paid me, with respect to Saunder's Flour, if his Flour is very fine, I wish you to engage 6 Barrels of it for me, I shall this Day pay off your account with Biscoes & Galt. Biscoes account is £35.15.5½ and to old Galt £61.15.11. you will perhaps be surprised when I have to inform you, that I have engaged with the Old skinflint again, when I came up yesterday Morning he asked me, if it was not time for P. M. Boyce to come down for my Negroes Cloathing. I told him that I expected that he, or Mr. Ragland would be down this Day, but that I was done with him, that I had called upon him for your account and mine, that I intended to sell my Tobacco, pay him off our account and have nothing more to do with him; he appeared to be much surprised, and a more anxious Man, you never saw, than he was, to have me continue my dealings with him, however, I told him, I was much vexed at my last Year's account and that I could not deal with him any longer, and went up to Polloc's, when I got there he refused to furnish me with any article, but at the runing rates, of course I could not engage with him, as that was his mode of dealing, and fortunately as I thought, when returning, I met D. Ragland who told me, that Mr. Galt called him in, and told him to endeavor with me to take my Goods of him, if he should meet with me, I accordingly went. The Old Man told me that I must not leave him, that he would be bound I should have no fault to find with my account after taking them up, he assured me that I should (get) my New Goods at 100% (*"100%," the meaning is not clear here, perhaps a slip of the pen for 10%*) from the prime cost and gave me 33/6 for my Tobacco, which was 16 more than any other person would give and I could not tell where to apply, after leaving Polloc. Ragland is pleased with the Goods. Give my kind Love to my dear little William Bolling and tell him in addition to his Order or rather request, I have sent him a Cap which I hope will please, and will be delivered to him by Mr. Dudley Ragland, if the Shoes does not fit, they can be changed. The Puttie glass and only one Bunch of Nail Rod, as it is quite too large, and smaller is not now to be had in Town, for Mr. R and one of Mr. Galts young men, has been all over the Town of Richmond, and can not get any smaller. I thought it best to send one bunch, tho it was too large. I am in great haste with most affectionate Love to You all

Your Ever Affectionate Father
Thomas Bolling

N. B. I have paid your account to B. J. Shephard, £7.

Two

County Clerk's Office
GOOCHLAND COUNTY
Goochland, Virginia
P. G. Miller, *Clerk*

Hervey Allen, *Esq.*, *November* 28, 1925
Dear Sir: —

Replying to your letter of the 24th instant. The will of John Allan (1834) is not recorded here. You will find a copy of the will recorded in the Chancery Court of the City of Richmond, in Will Book No. 2, page 457. The will of William Galt (copy) is recorded in the same office in Deed Book 117-B, page 99. Mr. Chas. O. Saville is the clerk of the Chancery Court of the City of Richmond.

Yours very truly,
P. G. Miller
(*Clerk*)

(P. S.) The "Byrd" lands, comprising upwards of 6000 acres, were devised to John Allan by will of Wm. Galt. This estate, so named possibly, from Byrd Creek, a stream running through it, was situated on the James River, in Goochland County (and partly in Fluvanna Co.) about 50 miles West of Richmond. It has been subdivided into smaller farms, among the most fertile and productive in the County.

Following receipt of the above, request was made to the Clerk's Office, Chancery Court of the City of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia, for certified copies of the wills of William Galt, and of John Allan deceased, which are here printed verbatim from the copies supplied.

Three

Last Will and Testament of William Galt

I, WILLIAM GALT, of the City of Richmond, State of Virginia, bearing always in mind, and admonished by the circumstances of my present state, as well as by the word of truth, recorded in Sacred Scripture, which I cherish as the foundation of my firm faith and the anchor of my hope for happiness in an eternal state, how encertain is the tenure of human life, as it now exists, and being desirous, while it is permitted me, to dispose of my temporal means and estate, the result, under Divine Providence, of my own, I trust, honest exertions, as it becometh my duty and my relations to God and man, do make this my last will and testament, which it is my desire should bear witness to my firm faith in the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the source of all my existing hope and consolation.

1st. I desire that all my just debts be paid, they are few and small, compared with my means. Intending an equitable distribution of my visible estate in Virginia, with the exception after mentioned, among my near kinsmen near me, namely, John Allan, William Galt, Jun. and his brother James Galt, all of the City of Richmond, the first my nephew, the other two, nearest kinsmen of my name, children of my adoption and nurture.

2nd. I give, devise and bequeath to the said John Allan, my three landed estates, named the "Byrd," lying and being situate in the Counties of Goochland and Fluvanna, on the Byrd Creek, with the slaves, stocks and property of all kinds belonging thereto; also, the following real estate in the City of Richmond, to-wit: my land and tenements on E Street, now occupied by Hall & Moore, and Mrs. Higginboth, with the stores of the latter tenement; my vacant lot corner of F and 2nd Streets, opposite the residence of Charles Ellis; my land and tenement on 14th Street, now in his occupation, and my land and store on 15th Street, occupied by Ellis and Allan, wooden tenement on the same street, occupied by Pascal, and my square parcel of land in the rear thereof, having some old buildings thereon, which, and the other property on 15th Street, I purchased at a sale of the property of Ellis & Allan, to him, the said John Allan, his heirs, and lawful distributees, in absolute property forever. I give and bequeath to Mrs. Allan, the wife of said John, my Carriage and horses.

3rdly. I give, devise and bequeath to the said William Galt, Junior, one equal moiety in value of my landed estate in Fluvanna, named "The Fork" containing at this time three several plantations on the Fluvanna or James River, with a like moiety of the slaves, stocks and property of all kinds belonging thereto. Also the following real estate in the City of Richmond, to-wit: my land and tenement fronting on E Street occupied by myself as a dwelling house, by Norman Stewart, and by William and William Galt, Jun. for their business, that is to say, for a store and lumber house; the land and tenement on 14th Street the ground floor whereof is occupied by the Clerk of the United States Court, for his office, to the said William Galt, Junr. his heirs and lawful distributees in absolute property forever, with all the appurtenances thereunto belonging.

4thly. I give and bequeath to the said James Galt, one equal moiety in value, of all my slaves, stocks and property of all kinds belonging to the Fork estate, whereof the other moiety has been, in the last article given and bequeathed to William Galt, Jun. his brother; but as the said James Galt is a native of Scotland, and although he has sometime since, in due form of law, declared his intention to become a citizen of the United States of America, and in pursuance thereof has abjured allegiance to his native Soverign, yet has not been actually naturalized, and so may not, according to law, be capable of taking and holding real estate. I give and devise to the said John Allan and William Galt Junior, and the survivor of them, and his heirs, upon the trust and condition after mentioned, the other equal moiety in value of my said landed estate named "the Fork" whereof one such moiety I have already herein given to the said William Galt, junior, in absolute property, together with the following real estate in the City of Richmond, to-wit: my parcel of land on 13th Street, whereon is a tenement occupied by Shepherd & Pollard, and a lumber house occupied by Otis, Dunlop & Company, my land and tenements corner of E and 13th Street, partly occupied by Charles Z. Abraham, as an Apothecary's Shop, with the land and tenements in the rear thereof on 13th Street, and the strip of land adjoining Poore's property, which I purchased of Gallego's estate, and whereon Dr. Tazewell, when my tenant, had a stable, with the appurtenances, but charged with the payment to the said James Galt of the sum of ninety thousand dollars, within twelve months after the time limited by law, pursuant to his declaration aforesaid, for being admitted a citizen of the United States, or to his lawful representatives; but upon this express trust and condition, that the said charge shall be satisfied and acquitted if the said John Allan and William Galt, Jun. the survivor of them, or his heirs, do, within the time aforesaid, by deed sufficient in the law, convey to the said James Galt, or his heirs, able to take and hold real estate in fee by the laws of Virginia, all the said lands tenements and appurtenances hereby to them as aforesaid devised, in absolute property and inheritance, together with the nett mesne rents, issues and profits thereof, or so dispose thereof, with the assent and consent of the said James Galt, or his aforesaid, that he or they may receive the actual and true nett proceeds thereof.

5thly. It is my will and desire that the men of my married slaves, if both husband and wife belong to me, shall be considered as belonging to and accompanying the plantation on which their wives respectively reside; and that the division of the Fork estate hereinbefore mentioned, be so made, that the slaves, stocks &c upon and attached to the upper plantation, may remain thereon, and those belonging to the two lower plantations may remain upon the same, but so as not to infringe the foregoing arrangement designed by me for the comfort of married persons.

6thly. I give and devise to the said John Allan and William Galt, jun. in equal and undivided moieties, my lumber house, stables and lots of land inclosed on Tobacco Alley, between 13th and 14th Streets, to them and their heirs forever.

7thly. I give and bequeath my household furniture to William Galt, Jun. and my watch and wearing apparel to the said James Galt.

8thly. It is my will and desire that the business carried on in the City of Richmond under the firm of William & William Galt, jun. be continued for the benefit, from its commencement, of the said John Allan, William Galt, jun. and James Galt, each being equally, that is to say, one third interested; and that the said James Galt be in relation to such interest be admitted by the said John Allan and William Galt, jun. and actually exist as a partner in the said business, as soon as he attains his full age of twenty one years; to which effect, and that this my desire may be fulfilled. I give and bequeath my funds appropriated to the said business or which ought to accrue to me therefrom, and substitute the said John Allan and James Galt in my place, and give to each of them one third share of the interest therein, that is to say, a moiety to each, of my two thirds of the concern and my slave Dandridge to the concern.

9thly. I give, devise and bequeath to Elizabeth Galt, the land and brick tenement now occupied by her, with the adjoining two vacant lots of land in the said City, all which I purchased at the sale of John Lesslie's estate, and also the negro woman Annie, with her increase, to her and her heirs forever.

10thly. I give and bequeath to John Allan and William Galt, jun, and the survivor of them, in trust, that they and he shall hold and apply the same to and for the sole use and benefit of the said Elizabeth Galt and her children, fifty shares of the new stock of the Bank of Virginia, and fifty shares of the stock of the Farmers' Bank of Virginia.

11thly. I desire that the acting executor or executors hereinafter named set free my negro woman Patty and my negro boy Belmour, and thereupon give the former twenty, the latter forty dollars.

12thly. I release to the Rev. John H. Rice and to Phill Pleasants, the debt which each respectively owes me.

13thly. I direct, authorize and empower my Executors hereinafter named or such of them as are qualified to act, to sell my plantation in the Counties of Campbell and Amherst, on the part whereof in Amherst a Merchant Mill has been built, with the slaves, stock and property of all kinds thereon; also all the real estate which I own in the town of Lynchburg, and the vacant lot opposite the Monumental Church, which I purchased of Mayo.

14th. I give and bequeath to the trustees of Hampden Sidney College in addition to the permanent fund of the Theological Seminary, thirty shares of the Stock of the Farmers' Bank of Virginia.

15th. I desire that ten shares of my old stock of the Bank of Virginia, be secured to the use of the First Presbyterian Church, in the City of Richmond, so that the profits accruing therefrom, be applied in aid of the Minister's salary; and I enjoin it upon my Executors to have this well and lawfully done.

16th. I give and bequeath to the Rev. Mr. Armstrong, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, one thousand dollars.

17th. I give and bequeath to Miss Ann M. Valentine, two thousand dollars.

18th. Should any balance upon the settlement of the business of Galt & Galt appear against John Garth, such balance is to be remitted and given up to him, upon condition that he surrender to my executors any real property he may have purchased with the funds of the concern.

19th. I give and bequeath to James Galt five hundred dollars, in addition to what is before given him, to equalize my disposition of the furniture &c &c.

20th. I give and bequeath to Miss Rosanna Dixon, one thousand dollars.

21. I give and bequeath to my friend and man of business, John Forbes, One thousand dollars, which is to be in full of all accounts between us, and a testimony of my good will.

21. I give and bequeath to the said John Allan, William Galt, Jr. and James Galt, the survivors and survivor of them in trust to the sole use and benefit of Elizabeth Forbes, wife of the said John Forbes, and her family, that is to say her children, twenty shares of old stock of the Bank of Virginia.

22. I can rely on my executors for paying the foregoing legacies without needless delay; but none are to be demanded until after they shall have collected of my debts sufficient to satisfy the same without leaving any unsatisfied.

23. I give my pew in the First Presbyterian Church to the said John Allan, William Galt, Jr. and James Galt.

I give and bequeath to Doctor James Black in trust for and to the exclusive use of Mrs. William Dennison, one thousand pounds sterling.

I give and bequeath to Miss Mary Allan, one thousand pounds sterling.

I give and bequeath to Jane Walch one thousand pounds sterling on condition that she marry with the consent of Mr. Miller, Mrs. Fowlds and her father, or of the survivors or survivor of them; to be paid within twelve months after her marriage with such consent shall have been certified to my acting executors or either of them.

All the residue of my estate not herein previously disposed of exclusive of six hundred pounds sterling to be remitted to Mr. Fowlds during the summer of this year, I give and bequeath to Mrs. Fowlds, Mrs. Johnston, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Black, Doctor James Black in trust for Mrs. Dennison, Miss Mary Allan and Miss Jane Walch.

Lastly, revoking all wills and testaments by me heretofore made I hereby name and appoint the said John Allan, William Galt, Jr. and James Galt, executors of this my last will and testament; but the said James Galt is not to act as such, until he be of full age, and I hereby direct that my said executors be not required to give security as such, nor to ask or require security or indemnity from my legatees in Scotland.

In witness whereof, I the said William Galt, the testator have to this my last will and testament, set my hand and seal this twenty fifth day of March, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and twenty five.

WILLIAM GALT W. G.
(*Seal*)

Signed, sealed, published and declared by William Galt, Sen'r, as and for his last will and testament, in the presence and hearing of us, who at his request, in his presence, and in the presence of each other, have subscribed our names as witnesses attesting the same.

ROBERT GORDON
JAMES H. BROWN
NORMAN STEWART

At a Superior Court of Law for Henrico County, held at the Capitol in the City of Richmond, on Tuesday the twenty-ninth day of March, in the year 1825.

This last will and testament of William Galt, late of the City of Richmond, deceased, was proved according to law by the oaths of Robert Gordon, James H. Brown and Norman Stewart, witnesses thereto, and ordered to be recorded. And on the motion of John Allan and William Galt, two of the executors named in the said last will and testament (the said William Galt being therein appointed by the name of William Galt, Junior) who made oath thereto and entered into and acknowledged a bond in the penalty of Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, conditioned as the law directs, but without security (the said William Galt, deceased, having by his said will directed that none should be required of them) certificate is granted them for obtaining a probate of the said will in due form; liberty being reserved to the other executor in the said will named to join in the probate when he shall attain the full age of twenty one years.

Teste:

J. ROBINSON, *Clerk*,

A copy,

J. ROBINSON, *Clerk*,

A copy,

Teste:

CHARLES O. SAVILLE, *Clerk*.

FOUR

Last Will and Testament of John Allan (foster-father of Edgar Allan Poe)

IN THE name of God, Amen: I, John Allan, of the City of Richmond, being of sound mind and disposing memory, do make and ordain this my last will and testament, revoking all other wills by me heretofore made.

Item 1. I desire that my executors shall as soon as possible, pay all my just debts.

Item 2nd. I devise unto Miss Ann Moore Valentine, three hundred dollars annually, and her board, washing and lodging to be paid and found her by my executors out of my estate during her natural life, but this provision is to be in lieu and in discharge of the sum of two thousand dollars which I have in my possession belonging to her, and of which she is to discharge and acquit my estate in case she accepts of this bequest.

Item 3rd. I give and bequeath to my sisters Nancy Fowlds, Jane Johnston and Elizabeth Miller of Scotland three hundred pounds sterling each and to my sister Mary Allan one hundred pounds sterling.

Item 4th. I will and desire that my whole estate, real and personal shall be kept together and under the management of my executors hereinafter named, until my eldest child arrives to the age of twenty one years, except my present residence, with all the ground thereto attached, & the lot of ground at the intersection of F and 2nd Streets, opposite the present residence of Charles Ellis, which property I hereby authorize and empower my executors, or such of them as may act, to sell at the expiration of five years from this date if they shall think it advisable, and invest the proceeds arising from such sales in Bank Stocks or other public or private securities, which is to be held as the residue of my estate.

Item 5th. I give and bequeath to my beloved wife, Louisa Gabriella Allan, one third of the nett annual income of my whole estate during her natural life, or until our eldest child becomes of age, to be paid her annually by my executors. If she should be living when our eldest child becomes of age and the division of my estate takes place, then I desire that my beloved wife shall have during her natural life one third of my whole estate, to be so laid off as to include in her share my whole property in the City of Richmond, which may then remain unsold, but if the net annual rent or value of my property in Richmond shall not be equal to one third of the nett annual rent or value of all my estate then I desire and request that the difference may be made up to her out of some other part of my estate, and in case it shall exceed the one third of the net annual rent or value of my estate, then I desire that so much of the property in Richmond as may produce the excess may be withdrawn from her share.

Item 6th. I desire that the remaining two thirds of the income of my estate shall be applied by my executors to the support, maintenance & education of my children or so much thereof as may be necessary, and the balance invested for their benefit in stocks or other securities.

Item 7th. I give and bequeath all the residue of my estate to my children who may be living at the time of my death and to such as may be born after my death of which my wife at the time may be enscient, to be divided among them when the eldest becomes of age in the following manner, viz: if they shall all be boys then I desire that the division may be equal among them, or if they shall all be girls, then that the division shall also be equal among them, but if I should have children living at the time of both sexes, then I will and desire that the shares or parts of the boys shall be double that of the girls.

Item 8th. I will and desire that the part of my estate above devised to my wife for life, shall at her death be divided among my children in the same manner, and in the same proportions as the residue of my estate is above directed to be divided.

Item 9th. In the event all my children should die before they marry or arrive at the age of twenty one years, I then give and devise to my relations William Galt and James Galt and to Mr. Corbin Warwick and to the survivors and survivor of them and the heirs, executors and administrators of such survivor, all my estate, real and personal hereinabove devised to my children. Upon this special trust and confidence that they or the survivors of them or the survivor of them, and the heirs, executors and administrators of such survivor shall and will sell publickly or privately, as to them may seem best, the said estate real and personal, and pay over and apply four fifths of the proceeds of such sales to the sole and separate use and benefit of John Allan Fowlds son of my sister Nancy Fowlds, William Galt Johnston, son of my sister Jane Johnston and to the eldest son of my sister Elizabeth Miller, but in the event that they or either of them may be dead at that time, then I desire that the parts or shares of such of them as may be dead, may be divided among the brothers and sisters which he may have living, the remaining one fifth part of the proceeds I wish held and disposed of as I may hereafter by codicil direct and appoint. I desire that my relations shall out of my estate give to —— and —— a good English education.

Lastly, I constitute and appoint my beloved wife, Louisa Gabriella Allan and James Galt and Corbin Warwick executrix and executors of this my last will and testament. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this Seventeenth day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty two.

JOHN ALLAN (*Seal*)

Signed, sealed, published & declared by John Allan, as & for his last will & testament in our presence & attested by us in his presence.

TH. NELSON
M. CLARK
ROBERT H. CABELL

Mrs. Louisa Gabriella Allan, wife of Jno. Allan
John Allan, child & 1 *enseignt*
1/3^{1} 3/3 n for life of 1/3 of *perisha* estate

1st pay all my debts.

2nd. My whole estate to be kept under the management of my exors. hereinafter mentioned until my eldest child becomes of age, the house and all the ground contiguous and attached to the same, I hereby authorize and empower my executors, or such of them as may act, to sell if they shall think it advisable after the expiration of 5 years from this date, also lot at intersection of F and 2nd Street, opposite Mr. Ellis, money arising from such sales to be invested in Bank Stocks or other public securities in discretion of exors. 1/3 of the net annual income of my whole estate to be paid to my beloved L. G. A. during her natural life or until my eldest child becomes of age. At the division of my estate I desire that my wife shall have one third of my estate for her life to be so laid off as to include the Town property, which if it should not amount to one third of the nett annual income then the same is to be made up to her out of some other part of my estate, if it should exceed it, then a part of it is to be deducted.

To Miss Ann Moore Valentine $300. per annum and her board lodging and washing to be paid and found her out of my estate during her natural life, and this provision is to be in lieu of $2000. which I hold of her money, and of which my estate is to be discharged if she accepts this bequest. To each of my sisters Nancy Fowlds, Jane Johnston, Elizabeth Miller £300 Sterling, and to my sister Mary Allan £100 Sterling, all residing in Scotland. I devise the whole of my estate among my children which may be alive at the time of my death and of such as my wife may at that time prove to be ensignt, in case they should be all boys I then desire that the estate may be equally divided among them in case of the birth of a daughter or daughters then I desire that my son or sons as the case may be shall be entitled to double what my daughters may have, my children to take the part of such of them as may die under age. In case of the death of all my children without being married or arriving at the age of 21 years I then give and devise to my relations Wm. Galt & Jas. Galt & to Corbin Warwick & to their heirs, exors. & admrs, all the estate given above to my children, upon this special trust and confidence that they or such of them as may act, shall sell all the estate, real and personal, and out of the proceeds apply 4/5ths for the sole, seperate use and benefit of John Allan Fowlds son of sister Nancy Fowlds, William Galt Johnston, son of my sister, Jane Johnston and to the eldest son of my sister Elizabeth Miller, and in case of the death of either or all of them before my own death, before the death or marriage of my children, then and in that event I wish the brothers and sisters of such of them as may be dead to take his or their part or share, the remaining 1/5th part I wish disposed of in such manner as I may hereafter appoint by codicil. I desire that my executors shall out of my estate provide give to ——— a good english education for two boys sons of Mrs. Elizabeth Wills, which she says are mine, I do not know their names, but the remaining fifth, four parts of which I have disposed of must go in equal shares to them or the survivor of them but should they be dead before they attain the age of 21 years then their share to go to my sister's Fowlds children in equal proportions with the exception of three thousand dollars, which must go to Mrs. Wills and her daughter in perpetuity.

John Allan, Dec. 31st, 1832

[*Originally in John Allan's own Handwriting*]

This memo, in my own handwriting is to be taken as a codicil and can be easily proven by any of my friends.

The notes preceding are in the handwriting of my friend, Jno. G. Williams.

The twins were born sometime about the 1st of July, 1830. I was married the 5th October 1830 in New York, my fault therefore happened before I ever saw my present wife and I did not hide it from her. In case therefore these twins should reach the age of 21 years & from reasons they cannot get their share of the fifth reserved for them, they are to have $4000. each out of my whole estate to enable them to prosecute some honest pursuit, profession or calling.

March 15th, 1833, I understand one of Mrs. Wills' twin sons died some weeks ago, there is therefore one only to provide for.

My wife is to have all my furniture, books, bedding, linen, plate, wines, spirits &c &c, Glass & China ware.

John Allan

At a Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery held for Henrico County at the Capitol in the City of Richmond, the 8th day of May, 1834.

This last will and testament of John Allan, deceased, and codicil thereto annexed, were produced in Court by James Galt, an Executor in the said will named, and the said will was thereupon proved according to law by the oaths of Thomas Nelson, Micajah Clarke and Robert H. Cabell, the witnesses thereto; and there being no subscribing witnesses to the said codicil, William Galt and the said Thomas Nelson were sworn and severally deposed that they are well acquainted with the testators handwriting, and verily believe that the parts of the said codicil stated therein to have been written by the testator and his name thereto in two instances subscribed are of the said testators proper handwriting. Whereupon the said will and codicil and the notes written on the same sheet of paper with the codicil and mentioned in the latter, are ordered to be recorded, and at the same Circuit Superior Court, continued and held at the Capitol aforesaid on the 26th day of the same month of May, 1834. Louisa G. Allan, widow and relict of the said John Allan, deceased, and executrix named in his said last will and testament, appeared in Court and renounced the Executorship, and also declared that she will not take or accept the provision or any part thereof made for her by the said will, and renounced all benefit which she might claim thereby.

And on the motion of the aforesaid James Galt, one of the executors in the said will named, who made oath thereto according to law and with William Galt.and the said Louisa G. Allan, his securities, entered into and acknowledged a bond in the penalty of one hundred thousand dollars, conditioned as the law directs, certificate is granted the said James Galt for obtaining a probate of the said will in due form. Liberty being reserved to the other executor named in the said will to join in the probate when he shall think fit.

Teste:

J. Robinson, C. C.

A Copy,

Teste:

J. Robinson, C. C.

A Copy,

Teste:

Charles O. Saville, *Clerk.*

FIVE

Comments on Some Legal Aspects of John Allan's Will

" The document probated May 8, 1834, consists of a will of nine Items executed April 17, 1832, some notes said by the testator to be in the handwriting of " my friend, Jno. G. Williams," and an undated holographic codicil signed without witnesses, on the same sheet as the notes, which from reference in its fourth clause can be ascribed to March 15, 1833, or some date subsequent thereto. This description has the authority of the Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery for Henrico County, Virginia. The certificate states " and his name thereto in two instances subscribed " refers to the two signatures of John Allan appearing respectively at the bottom and the top of the holographic codicil. The first is obviously not *subscribed* to the codicil. Since notes and codicil are on the same sheet, in the order named, the first of the two signatures, if subscribed to anything, was subscribed to the notes with the intention of constituting them as a first codicil. There would seem to be no other explanation for the signature beneath the notes and above the holographic codicil, and it is made more probable by the fact that the notes are written in the first person throughout as though intended for execution by the testator, and in form as good as, or better than, the holographic provisions. Inasmuch as the notes are adopted as part of the holographic codicil by the testator by reference, they were probated along with the will and holographic codicil, so that the error, if the above surmise be correct, would be of importance only in regard to the sequence of separate codicils. While this might be of the greatest importance in a given case it appears to be of little moment here except as a matter of interest.

The will proper, the notes and the holographic codicil constitute an odd legal document. The will and the notes bear internal evidence of having been composed by the same person, either a layman with some conceit of legal learning or a singularly ignorant lawyer. " Enceinte " has two forms, both misspellings, in the will, and a third variant misspelling in the notes, which would point rather to their joint authorship than to the contrary. Aside from this and some minor errors which a professional scrivener might be expected to avoid, the will and notes are inexpertly drawn. Both are couched in pseudo-legal phraseology apt to be affected by lay friends who " have had a great deal of experience drawing wills "; expressions of outright ambiguity are used; incongruous or even conflicting provisions occur; ordinary contingencies, the test of intelligent forethought, are ignored; clauses are inserted as afterthoughts, out of legal or logical order; certain provisions achieve absurdity which it is hard to believe the testator intended, as for instance in the bequest of a share of his estate to twins, where he leaves them equal shares of one-fifth, as though they were one child! As a whole the document is the very type and example of the litigation-breeding will, such as frequently proves the reliance and mainstay of a local bar for a generation.

A very few examples in point appear in the following:

1. Makes bequests of money, presumably to be paid forthwith out of capital as such bequests usually are, then in Item 4th directs that "my whole estate" be held in trust until eldest child is 21, thereby raising the conflicting presumption that the money bequests are to be paid only out of income. Which?

2. Does not by appropriate words constitute his executors testamentary trustees. Provides for the distribution of his estate on his eldest child becoming twenty-one, which would give their shares to minors, the remaining children; but appoints no testamentary guardians of minor children's estates until they become of age.

3. "My eldest child" does not specify whether eldest at testator's death or merely first surviving child to reach 21; if eldest child at his death dies before 21, how is time of distribution of estate determined? If guessing were permitted in interpreting a will it would be a fair venture that the testator really had in mind his youngest child instead of eldest, and became confused in terms; substitution of youngest for eldest, however, leaves distribution equally indeterminate, as to date.

4. "At the expiration of five years from this date" (Item 4th) apparently meant in the testator's mind "from my death," since he might not die for more than five years from "this date," namely, the date of execution of the will. This is almost certain from the fact that during the interval from the execution of the will to his death, whenever that might be, he would have control and discretion over the sale of any of his property *himself*, and discretion in his executors could not inhere until he died. He obviously wanted *them* to have five years in which to await a good market and exercise their discretion. This sheer oversight lends probability to the hazard as to "eldest child" above.

5. "My children" includes legitimate as well as illegitimate offspring. Inasmuch as this testator is believed to have had several of the latter in various places, this unequivocal language creates a flat inconsistency with the later division of the estate into *fifths*. Which is the oversight? Appellate courts take successive guesses at such problems until the estate goes in fees.

6. Share of boys to be double that of girls. *Quaere:* if one boy and several girls, would share of boy be double that of *all* the girls? According to wording in notes, the answer would be Yes. But did testator mean this?

7. "And to the survivors and survivor of them and the heirs, execu-

tors and administrators of such survivor, all my estate, real and personal, hereinabove devised to my children," etc., (Item 9th). This is almost Gilbertian. John Allan actually devises *in praesentia* to the heirs, administrators and executors of a *survivor*. These do not have heirs, etc., who can inherit until they *cease* to survive. Technically one does not devise personal property. This is less than an untechnical will; it is grossly stupid and ineffectual. The holographic codicil by Allan himself in private makes no pretense at legal verbiage. John Allan doesn't say whether the specific bequest of furniture, etc., is to be taken as *part of* or in *addition to* his wife's share provided in the will — a very important financial question to the other heirs.

8. The codicil which John Allan wrote himself in private was really not actuated by a desire to make any additional devise (real estate) or bequest (personal property). It was a mere subterfuge to save his face, square himself with his conscience, or bolster up his post-mortem reputation. It was not a *devise* but a *device*.

He was either shamed into it by the mother of the twins, or by the discovery of his " fault " by his wife. Note: he had already provided the " fifth " for these twins; the codicil giving them $4000. each, if they could not get their shares of the fifth, was a subterfuge; unnecessary, since, if they could not get the " fifth," they could not get $8000. either; — both depended on the same will and the same " reasons " would inhere.

All of the holographic codicil was written at *one sitting*. The date inserted in the body of it, meant to give the impression that the death of one of the twins had occurred — or become known to him — just after he had written the first few sentences — is palpable stage-business. The proof of this is that had he written the first part of the codicil separately, *he would at the same time* have signed his *name* beneath it, to give it effect. He did not do so, showing it was all written at one time and signed as a whole.

He therefore knew that one twin was dead before he started to write the codicil at all. The real excuse for writing it is the exculpation passage where he says his " fault " occurred before he met his present wife. This in law is known as " self-serving testimony." Such narrative statements, like dissertations on history, religion, etc., have no proper place in a will. Like all extraneous passages in any legal document they are called " surplusage." Allan's remarks had no *testamentary* value and should have been left out. They were, however, the real purpose and object of the codicil. The futility of the $4000. bequest is at once apparent when it is reduced to its simplest terms: " If you can't get what I left you on page 2 of this same will, then get what I leave you on page 3." It was a subterfuge in order to get in his self-serving testimony about himself.

The final paragraph — furniture, books, etc. — was a palpable sop to the wife after the disclosure of the illegitimate children. Its effect would be likely to get her into litigation over the total amount of her share — whether the furniture, books, etc., were to be counted into her third, like the residence property, or to be in addition to it. The value of the furniture, books, etc., might make this an important question to all concerned.

There is no doubt that the wife wisely dodged a lot of trouble by renouncing all her rights under the will and electing to take her share under the intestate law. This would be determined once for all by the court.

No attempt at the pseudo-legal verbiage adorns the codicil. It is colloquial in every word, straight from the heart. But it is the heart of a man not aching to provide for the fatherless and to comfort a bereaved wife, but suddenly stung with shame and torn with anxiety over his own post-mortem reputation."

IV

POE'S BROTHER[935]

WILLIAM HENRY LEONARD POE, the elder brother, by two years, of Edgar Allan Poe, was born in Boston in 1807 while his parents, David Poe and Elizabeth Arnold Poe, were filling an engagement at the Federal Street Theater in that city. The child seems to have first seen the light sometime between January 12 and February 22, 1807, as the unusual interruptions in the appearances of his mother, who was then playing in Shakespearean parts, "Ophelia," "Cordelia," and "Blanche," indicate. The parents of the Poe boys were both poor, and seem to have been unable to care for their first child, for, on a visit to Baltimore during the theatrical vacation, sometime between May 25 and September 14, 1807, the boy was left with his paternal grandfather, "General" David Poe, who then resided at Number 19 Camden Street, Baltimore. It was thus in the family of his grandparents that he was "adopted" and brought up.

David and Elizabeth Poe returned to play in Boston where, on January 19, 1809, Mrs. Poe gave birth to her afterward famous son, Edgar. Her husband, David, died or deserted her in New York in July, 1810, after which Mrs. Poe went South, playing in Richmond, Norfolk, Charleston, South Carolina, and other places in the Southern circuit. In December, 1810, the date is not certain, she gave birth to her third child, Rosalie, in Norfolk, Virginia. These three children, William, Edgar, and Rosalie, constituted therefore the family of David and Elizabeth Poe. In December, 1811, Mrs. Poe died in Richmond, Virginia, in the house of a milliner, in circumstances of great poverty and extreme tragedy. Edgar was "adopted," or taken into the house of John and Frances Allan, and Rosalie, or Rose, was taken home and cared for by a Mrs. William Mackenzie, both Mr. Allan and Mr. Mackenzie being Scotch merchants in comfortable circumstances. In the meantime, William Henry Leonard Poe, the eldest born, had remained with his grandparents in Baltimore.

The first mention of "Henry," as he was called, occurs in a letter written on February 8, 1813, from Baltimore by Eliza Poe (afterward Mrs. Herring), the paternal aunt of Henry and Edgar, to Mrs. John Allan in Richmond. The letter deals, for the most part, with Edgar, whom the Poes were anxious to care for, but goes on to say:

> . . . Henry frequently speaks of his little brother and expresses a great desire to see him, tell him he sends his best love to him and is greatly

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[935] Reprinted here slightly altered and abridged from *Poe's Brother, The Poems of William Henry Leonard Poe*, by Hervey Allen and Thomas Ollive Mabbott, George H. Doran Company, Publishers, New York, 1926.

pleased to hear that he is so good as also so pretty a boy as Mr. Douglas represented him to be. . . .

Mr. Douglas was a Baltimore gentleman who had seen young Edgar, then only four years old, in company with his foster-parents, the Allans, at the Virginia Hot Springs.

Edgar's foster-mother seems to have been afraid that the Baltimore relatives might claim her little " son," and there was consequently little contact between the two orphan brothers. After the return of the Allans from England in 1820, some correspondence between the two boys seems to have taken place, for, in November, 1824, John Allan writes to Henry Poe, then seventeen years of age, a letter in which he complains bitterly of Edgar, attacks the legitimacy of Rosalie, and apparently attempts to estrange the two young men. In this letter there is reference to a correspondence between the two brothers as follows:

> DEAR HENRY:
>
> I have just seen your letter of the 25th ult., to Edgar and am much afflicted he has not written you . . . etc.

Mr. Allan appears to have had his own private reasons for wishing to estrange the two brothers, but in this he was not successful, for, sometime during the Summer of 1825, William Henry Leonard paid a visit to his brother, Edgar Allan, then living at the corner of Main and Fifth Streets in Richmond with his foster-parents, the Allans.[936] Edgar was at that time paying attention to, and was undoubtedly very much in love with a little girl who lived nearby, Sarah Elmira Royster, and Miss Royster has left a recollection of a visit paid to her by the two Poe brothers, in company with a friend of Edgar's by the name of Ebenezer Burling.

Henry was, at this time, either in the Navy or the Merchant Marine, probably the former as a letter of his from Montevideo shows, and Miss Royster remembered his appearing in a nautical uniform, seemingly that of a midshipman. The difficulties in the Allan household about 1825 were serious; Edgar was already " on the outs " with his foster-father, and the visit of his blood brother at such a time must have cemented their already natural affection.

From the early poetry left by both Edgar and Henry Poe, it plainly appears that both brothers were of a similar, poetically inclined, and somewhat melancholy temperament. Both inherited the same traits and predilections, and, it would seem, also the same weaknesses for Henry, even earlier than Edgar, went into ill-health. He was said to have been a delicate, sensitive, and willowly youth, and it is known that he died early of tuberculosis and drink.

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[936] J. H. Whitty prints in his *Memoir to the Collected Poems of Edgar Allan Poe,* a notice of F. W. Thomas alluding to an earlier visit of Henry Poe to Richmond.

Of Henry Poe's life about Baltimore, of the twenties and early thirties of the last century, very little is known. From a great variety of sources, hints in correspondence, and obscure recollections, it has been possible to piece together the following:

Henry Poe remained with his grandparents Mr. and Mrs. David Poe, Sr., up until the time of the death of the grandfather, October 19, 1816, when the family seems to have been living at Park Lane in the Western precincts (now Roborg Street), according to the old directories. Henry Poe seems also to have been helped and cared for by a Mr. Henry Didier, who had been a law student with David Poe, Jr. before the latter went on the stage. The widowed grandmother was left in poor circumstances, dependent on a small pension. Soon after the death of her husband, she became paralyzed and went to live with her daughter, Mrs. Maria Clemm, afterward Poe's mother-in-law, whither Henry also accompanied her.

In the meantime, however, probably about the time of the break-up of his grandparents' household, he went to sea. From various incidents which Edgar Poe afterward " incorporated " into his own biography, it seems likely that Henry visited the Mediterranean, the West Indies and South America, the near East, and possibly Russia. His adventures at least furnished forth a chapter of life which was afterward appropriated, and perhaps enlarged upon by his younger brother for " trade " purposes. It now appears, indeed, that many of the " standard " biographies of E. A. Poe are in reality a synthesis of Henry and Edgar, especially in regard to the years 1827–1829.

About the time that Edgar went to Boston in 1827, Henry Poe seems to have completed his experience at sea, for, from that time on, there is a fairly consecutive running reference to him as being in Baltimore. F. W. Thomas, afterward Edgar's close friend, says of Henry about 1826 :

> Your brother and I were then intimate — and rather rivals in a love affair.

Thomas was then living in Baltimore, and much about town with a rather gay, young, literary, social, and political set to which Henry Poe must also have belonged. He is known to have been rather wild, to have early developed a fondness for drink, to have been fond of female society — and to have died young. That he must also have possessed a considerable charm, not a little latent talent, a somewhat precocious development, and a vivid imagination, what little we have from his immature pen, seems clearly to indicate. In appearance, he was said to have resembled strangely his brother, Edgar, but to have been somewhat taller. From 1826 on, Henry's whereabouts, and what scanty information we have about his doings must be traced mainly through those of his brother, Edgar.

Edgar Poe matriculated at the University of Virginia, February 14, 1826. Before leaving Richmond, he had obtained the promise of Elmira Royster to marry him, and, upon departure, had presented her with a locket engraved with initials in which the engraver had made an error. It is also known that he sent back a letter to his sweetheart by James Hill, the Allan's darky coachman and slave, who drove Poe and his foster-mother to the University. This was probably the last letter which Elmira or " Myra," as he called her, received from Poe until a year or so before his death (1849), when he again became engaged to her. Owing to Mr. Allan's undoubtedly calculated parsimony — Poe was in debt upon his arrival at the University from lack of funds — the young Edgar engaged in the game of Loo at which he was unfortunate. Having no cash, he exploited his credit with Charlottesville merchants, and ran up a considerable debt in order to pay his classmates. Poe had " plunged " deeper than he realized, and when Mr. Allan was presented with the bills, *he took the opportunity* of removing Poe from the University at the end of the year. In the meantime, Mr. and Mrs. Royster had intercepted all of Poe's letters to Elmira, and had persuaded their daughter to become engaged to a Mr. A. Barrett Shelton, a young gentleman of considerable means and social status. The Roysters had, at one time, loaned Mr. Allan considerable sums, and were well enough known to him to be assured that Poe's prospects for an inheritance, although he had been brought up as a foster-son, were nil. Otherwise it is not likely that they would have opposed his suit. Upon returning to Richmond, Poe found that his sweetheart, who doubtless supposed him indifferent, had been removed and was engaged to his rival. The blow was a telling one. He was heart-broken, pursued by warrants for debt, and in disgrace with his " father " who desired him to be a lawyer. He quarreled with Mr. Allan, and left home going to Boston under the assumed name of *Henri Le Rennêt*. Here, probably on a little money furnished him by Mrs. Allan and his " aunt," Miss Anne Valentine, he " published " his first volume of poems, called *Tamerlane and Other Poems,* printed by a tyro printer named Calvin F. S. Thomas. The title poem dealt with his love affairs with Elmira Royster.

It now seems, from poetry published by Henry Poe in Baltimore in 1827, in the *North American,* that Poe sent a copy of this book to his elder brother who inserted certain selections from it, in the magazine mentioned, under his own initials. Edgar seems also to have written the full particulars of his tragic little love affair to William Henry Poe in Baltimore, after arriving at Fort Moultrie, Sullivan's Island, Charleston Harbor, South Carolina.

It was during this time, or shortly before, that he evidently communicated with his brother Henry. The result of these communications may be read in *The Pirate,* in the *Baltimore North American* for 1827. Whether the story is by E. A. Poe, or a romantic rendering of Edgar's letter to him by William Henry Poe, is hard to tell, probably the latter. . . .

In 1829, Henry Poe was known to have been employed in the office of one Henry Didier, a former law student with his father David, and to have been living with Mrs. Maria Clemm, his aunt, in Mechanics Row, Milk Street, Baltimore. His constant writing for the magazine, in 1827, implies that he had been in Baltimore some time. It is the opinion of this writer that Henry Poe's last voyage was made not later than 1827. That he (Henry) was in sailor togs in 1825, we know by his visit to Miss Royster. In 1827 we find him settled and writing for the *North American* in Baltimore. He must also have been entering now upon his period of decline for, in 1829, there is record of his illness and despairing drinking. A short time later he died of tuberculosis at Mrs. Clemm's.

The probabilities are, therefore, that the material that appeared in the *North American* in 1827 was his own, and Edgar's poems, copied from *Tamerlane.* Henry's romancing upon his brother's love affair with Elmira Royster, was exactly the tragic-romantic type of star-crossed lover plot which most tickled the sentimental-lugubrious palate of the period, and appealed especially to romantic youth. That Edgar had lost his sweetheart, and run away on an adventurous career was an opportunity which Henry could not neglect. Hence *The Pirate.* That this story refers to the Elmira incident, there cannot be the shadow of doubt. Henry had been taken to call upon her, Edgar had written him the particulars of the later affair.

Henry having treated the incident in prose, L. A. Wilmer, another contributor to the *North American,* now did it in poetry, and produced *Merlin* in which Elmira's name is used, and the machinery of the same plot more imaginatively exploited. In *Merlin* Elmira's " habitation " is given as near the " Hudson " instead of the James.

It is now in order to detail what is known of the rest of Henry Poe's short life. In 1829, Edgar Poe returned to Richmond, left the Army, visited Washington, and then went to live for a while in Baltimore during the Summer and Winter of 1829. At that time he lived certainly for a while with Henry and his aunt, Mrs. Clemm, and the little girl, Virginia, whom he afterward married in Baltimore. On May 20, 1829, Edgar Poe writes to John Allan from Baltimore, "*I have succeeded in finding Grandmother and my relatives.*" On August 10, 1829, Edgar Poe, still in Baltimore, again writes to John Allan, "*My Grandmother is extremely poor and ill (paralytic). My Aunt Maria (Mrs. Clemm) if possible still worse and Henry entirely given over to drink and unable to help himself, much less me*" — a statement that sufficiently indicates Henry's condition at the time. In July, 1830, Edgar entered West Point, and we again hear of Henry through him in another letter to John Allan, June 28, (1830). "*I take the first opportunity since arriving here of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of 21st May inclosing a U. S. note for $20 I received it three days ago — it has been lying some time in the W. P. post office where it was forwarded from Baltimore, by Henry.*" On his way to West Point from Richmond, Edgar had again visited his brother Henry in Baltimore in May and June, 1830.

Edgar Poe left West Point about February 18, 1831, after being dismissed by courtmartial. He stayed a short time in New York, and evidently arrived in Baltimore about the end of March, 1831, when he went to live with his Aunt Maria Clemm at Mechanics Row, Milk Street, in the Fells Point district. There were then in the household, Mrs. Clemm, Virginia Clemm, old Mrs. David Poe, the grandmother, Henry Poe, Henry Clemm, and to them was now added Edgar. Henry Poe was very ill, was dying in fact. Edgar must have spent much of his time nursing his elder brother for whom he had gone into debt. On August 2, 1831, the following notice appeared in the *Baltimore North American:*

> Died last evening, W. H. Poe aged 24 years. His friends and acquaintances are invited to attend his funeral this morning at 9 from the dwelling of Mrs. Clemm in Milk Street.

William Henry Leonard Poe was buried in the graveyard of the old First Presbyterian Church in Baltimore where his younger brother now lies. Edgar Allan Poe survived Henry by eighteen years.

V

OWING to conflicting statements as to the date of Poe's alleged *first* marriage to Virginia Clemm (in Baltimore), now current in biographies, the following letter and certificate are here printed showing that the license was issued September 22, 1835, and *not* 1834 as sometimes wrongly stated.

License Number 409

THE STATE OF MARYLAND

[SEAL] *Baltimore City, SCT.* [SEAL]

I hereby Certify to all whom it doth or may Concern, That on the twenty-second day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five a LICENSE issued from the OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF BALTIMORE COUNTY COURT, directed to the Reverend Mr. ——— or any other person qualified by Law to CELEBRATE THE RITES OF MARRIAGE between a certain Edgar A. Poe and Virginia E. Clemm of Baltimore County, according to Law, there appearing to him no lawful cause, or just impediment by reason of any consanguinity or affinity to hinder the same, as by the records of said Court appears, which records are now in my keeping.

THE
SUPERIOR COURT
OF BALTIMORE
IN THE
8th. JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT OF
MARYLAND

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I hereto subscribe my name and affix the Seal of the Superior Court of Baltimore City, this twentieth .... day of February, A.D., 1926.

STEPHEN C. LITTLE,

Clerk of the Superior Court of Baltimore, City

No direct proof of the marriage of Edgar A. Poe and Virginia Clemm in Baltimore in 1835, prior to their later public marriage in Richmond, can be found. The inference that it took place is not only aroused by the fact of a license having been issued, but made more certain by a reluctant admission, later on by Mrs. Clemm, that such a private marriage had taken place in Baltimore. The so-called " family tradition," assigning the place of marriage in Baltimore as St. Paul's, is difficult to trace to its source. The tradition was that the marriage had been performed by the Reverend John Johns, later Bishop of Virginia. In 1900, Professor James A. Harrison was informed by Mr. A. S. Johns, a son of the Bishop, that no tradition of such a marriage *was known to the Johns family*, and Professor Harrison was then referred to the records at Christ Church, Baltimore, where no record of the first Poe-Clemm marriage can be found. Similar searches at St. Paul's Parish, made for Professor Woodberry in September 1884, and for Professor Harrison in November, 1900, by Charles Handfield Wyatt, showed that Mr. Wyatt *may* have been mistaken as to the date of the marriage — " I think it was prior to 1828." Further search was therefore made again at St. Paul's.

SAINT PAUL'S PARISH
Baltimore, Maryland

February 24, 1926

My dear Mrs. Kinsolving[937]

I have examined the Parish books, in my possession as Registrar, and find therein no record of the marriage of the late Edgar Allan Poe.

Cordially yours
C. T. Gould
Registrar

The search has not been carried on exhaustively so far. The author has examined the columns of the available files of the Baltimore newspapers for September and October, 1835, without result. Further search in other church records of the date in and *about* Baltimore might bring results. It must be remembered that Poe was, at the time, anxious to conceal this marriage with a child from the relatives in Baltimore, hence no clergyman's record. It may have been before a justice of the peace. Such a marriage would have been kept doubly secret, at the time, as it was a social disgrace. Thus — a newspaper clipping of about a century ago —

> A marriage before a Justice of Peace is shocking to morals and good manners. It goes further than the design of degrading and insulting the Church; it humbles and degrades the parties, particularly that party, which the ceremony is chiefly intended to benefit and exalt, — the woman. A marriage of this kind would have more the appearance of indentures of apprenticeship in the city, or of hiring servants at a statute fair, than of any serious or solemn class of contract and obligation. We scarcely need add, how little suitable it would be to a country which has always been remarked for the delicacy and modesty of its women. *Baltimore North American.*

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[937] Search was made for the author by the kindness of Mrs. Sally Bruce Kinsolving, wife of the Rector of St. Paul's Parish, Baltimore, Maryland.

VI

F. W. THOMAS'S association with Poe, the Poe-Thomas correspondence, and the many reminiscences which Thomas has left of his friend, seem to make it worth while to collect here a more complete account of the man. The biography itself is of interest as it throws light on some of the remarks in the Poe-Thomas letters, and adds some authentic facts to the background of contemporary American life from 1775 to 1841; covering two generations in the persons of E. S. Thomas and F. W. Thomas, father and son, the latter, Poe's friend.

The data for Ebenezer S. Thomas has been kindly supplied by John Bennett, Esq., of Charleston, South Carolina, from a great mass of early American notes and data collected by him. The Life of F. W. Thomas is contained in a letter written by him to Poe in Philadelphia, August 3, 1841, probably to supply Poe with biographical material to use in notices of Thomas' books in some of the periodicals for which Poe wrote. The allusion to Henry Poe and early Baltimore days is of peculiar interest. The reason for the political and journalistic influence of F. W. Thomas will, in the light of the facts given below, now be more apparent:

EBENEZER S. THOMAS: Book-seller, Stationer; Editor,
CITY GAZETTE, Charleston, S. C.

Father of F. W. Thomas, author of *Clinton Bradshaw* and *East and West.* Another son edited the Louisville, Kentucky, *Daily Herald.* Born in Lancaster, Massachusetts, 1775. A nephew of Isaiah Thomas, publisher of the Worcester *Massachusetts Spy,* the famous Revolutionary journal, on which his father was employed as circulation agent and distributor.

ISAIAH THOMAS: his uncle: LL.D.: book-publisher, printer, binder, and book-seller; printed the American first editions of *Bell's Surgery, Cullen's Practice, Blackstone's Commentaries, Millott's Elements of Ancient and Modern History, Harvey's Works*, besides the first folio and royal quarto editions of the Bible printed in America. Known in England as 'The American Baskerville.'

Founder of the American Antiquarian Society; author of a *History of Masonry,* and the widely known *History of Printing*, in 2 vols.

Isaiah Thomas, as a journeyman printer, followed and perfected himself in his trade on the *Halifax Gazette*, Nova Scotia, where he got into political trouble for his freely-expressed opinions.

ISAIAH THOMAS was in business in Charleston, South Carolina, for two years, 1767–1768: I find no impression he made on the community, if he made any.

EBENEZER S. was apprenticed to ISAIAH, his uncle, to learn the printing, book-binding, and stationery business, in 1788, at the age of 13 years.

He left his uncle's shop in 1792, at termination of his apprenticeship, and was employed as a book-binder in Boston until 1795, in which year he came to Charleston, South Carolina, and here became a partner of CALEB CUSHING, printer, book-binder, book-seller, and stationer.

CUSHING was a Boston man; whether any relative of the later politician of the same name I cannot say. He died in Charleston of yellow fever, leaving the book-business to THOMAS, located, in 1802, at 117 Tradd Street, dwelling above the shop, as was customary, in Scotch fashion, at that time. In 1803 he removed his business to the now more fashionable street, — to 121 Broad Street, as book-seller and stationer.

An ambitious man of more than ordinary abilities and outlook, THOMAS, desiring to establish personal relations with the book-publishing firms of Great Britain, in 1800 . . . and annually therafter . . . went to England and Scotland, . . . that is, London and Edinburgh . . . to select and to purchase his own stock, and form personal acquaintances abroad who should act correspondents on whom he might depend for future advices and supplies generally. He had friendly relations with Constable, Scott's publisher; became intimately acquainted with Hone, the book and print-seller of Ludgate Hill; made the familiar acquaintance of Washington Irving, then Consul in London; and established business relations with the old firm of Vernor & Hood, afterward Vernor, Hood & Sharp, with which house he attained unlimited credit, and through them, throughout England and Scotland, acquaintance of great benefit.

In 1803 he took into partnership, James Male, under the firm-name of Thomas & Male, and made his fourth purchasing voyage to England and Scotland, visiting many friends of position, and touring the Continent as a means of cultivation and information.

He returned from England from this trip with a printed catalogue of 50,000 volumes, in every branch of literature, arts, and sciences, travels, fiction, and religion, belles lettres and textbooks, then by far the largest importation ever made into the United States by a book-dealer.

In that year, 1803, the African slave-trade was reopened for a term of five years; the reaction upon literature and book-buying was immediate and disastrous. There were then in Charleston four considerable book-selling houses, Young's, Bailey & Waller, Crow & Query, and E. S. Thomas. Bailey & Waller failed, and were sold out at public auction by Henry Smerdon, vendue master, a remnant stock, of 'novels, history, poetry, voyages, etc., etc., at No. 16 Broad Street, opposite the State Bank.'

THOMAS, embarking elsewhere in business, (while continuing to work off his stock here,) with Messrs. Christopher and Nathaniel Olney, in 1804–5, as partners, built, at Providence, R. I., the fifth cotton factory in the U. S.

In the fall of 1804 or 1805, returning to Charleston, he evidently made a 'whirlwind courtship'; for he married, during that brief stay, here, a Miss Fonerdon, daughter of Adam Fonerdon, Esq., of Baltimore, who was in Charleston on her way to Italy with a sister and brother-in-law. These last continued their journey, . . . she remained; and the following Spring returned to Providence and the cotton-mill. THOMAS closed out his book-shop here in 1807. He also sold out from the cotton-mill business at Providence.

BUT, in 1810, returned to Charleston, having purchased the plant and goodwill of the *City Gazette,* of Charleston, from Peter Freneau, its editor and publisher: (Freneau & Paine, and afterward Freneau & Williams).

PETER FRENEAU: Brother of Philip Freneau, the 'Poet of the Revolution.' There were then but two papers in Charleston, and but three in the State. The ancient *State Gazette,* Timothy & Mason, was on its last legs. Freneau was a correspondent of Thos. JEFFERSON, and an ardent supporter of the Jeffersonian republican party, which the *City Gazette* espoused, as against the Federalists.

On January 1st, 1810 the paper became Thomas's; proprietor, publisher, and editor; though FRENEAU remained associated with its editorial staff until his death, contributed to its political animus and power.

Thomas published the *City Gazette* as a daily, and the old *South Carolina Gazette* as a weekly, and was successful with both, his net profit on both during the established years of his management reaching $12,000 per annum. The Gazette was the one and only republican (Jeffersonian), paper in the city, and was strongly supported, and backed by prominent men.

Among intimate friends of Thomas during his years as book-seller and editor in Charleston were Robert Y. Hayne, ex-governor Charles Pinckney, Hon. William Lowndes, John Ceddes, governor of S. C., and Col. Thomas Lehre, one of the prominent leaders of the Jeffersonian party, Peter Freneau, and Hon. Wm. Loughton Smith, U. S. Ambassador to Portugal, a brilliant man, and like Hayne and Lowndes, a statesman of no mean rank. Pinckney, Freneau, and Lehre formed the committee of consultation of the Jeffersonian party, and Thomas was known as 'the lever of the Triumvirate,' they being dubbed the Triumvirs, and he their official spokesman through the *City Gazette:* they were nicknamed Caesar, Pompey, and Lepidus, by the Federal party.

Among journalistic friends made at this period Thomas counted Maj. M. M. Noah, afterward editor of the *N. Y. Evening Star,* one time Consul at Tunis, and known among pamphleteers as 'Muly Mulack' from his signed contributions to the *N. Y. Times,* Townsend, of the *N. Y. Express* also was an old friend of Thomas's.

Thomas supported Langdon Cheves for Congress, and that campaign sent Calhoun, Lowndes and Cheves from South Carolina, such a 'constellation of talent and statesmanship' says one, pretty truly, 'as seldom has been sent to that body from one State.'

It was through Thomas's publication of a political letter from M. M. Noah, attacking Jos. Alston, for alleged participation in Burr's so-called conspiracy, and for alleged misconduct of an election which made Alston governor of S. C., that Thomas was prosecuted by Jos. Alston for libel, found technically guilty by the jury, was escorted from his prison by a brass band and parade of admirers; and shot at through a window by some un-identified supporter of Alston's.

It was at Thomas's suggestion to David Ramsay, the historian, that the latter undertook his *Life of Washington;* . . . and it was at the very moment of the conclusion of Thomas's trial in the Charleston court that a loud report of a pistol was heard from the street near by . . . when Ramsay was shot by one Lining whom Ramsay, as a consulting physician, had pronounced insane. This is just incidental.

His health having suffered from the climate of Carolina, especially through the several summers he had lived in the city, Thomas sold out the *City Gazette*, in January, 1816; after what he afterward called the happiest six years of his life, though during five of the six the country had suffered economically from embargo, non-intercourse, and war.

With the competent fortune amassed here by the *Gazette* he retired to Baltimore, his wife's former home, and with his family settled on a considerable landed property he had bought near Baltimore. There he was a notable demonstrator of science as applied to agriculture, and did much to promote expert farming; is so referred to occasionally by authorities at that time. But the great decline in the value of crops and real estate broke him, in 1827; he sold his property to pay his debts, and removed West, to Cincinnati, where he established the *Daily Commercial-Advertiser*, 1828; which he styled the second daily paper in the western country. In 1835 he established the Cincinnati *Daily Evening Post*;—and, retiring from active editorial work, in 1839, toured the States campaigning for Wm. Henry Harrison.

He was an ardent supporter of the Federal Union, and an antagonist of John C. Calhoun from the discovery of the end and aim of Nullification onward. Revisiting Charleston in 1840, he found himself, much to his regret, *persona non grata* to many of his old acquaintances, owing to the increasing bitterness of national questions . . . and his vigorously maintained position on Nullification, States Rights, and Secession, (as a threat).

He seems to have been really a discriminating and genuine amateur appreciator of the fine arts, and cultivated his appreciation during his travels abroad. It is the tradition that it was he who discovered and encouraged Hiram Powers, the Cincinnati sculptor, whose Greek Slave was considered in its day the acme of American sculptural art . . . Thorwaldsen being then the arbiter and mode.

The date of his death I do not know.—J. B.

Frederick W. Thomas, Poe's friend.[938]

From a letter written to Poe in Philadelphia by F. W. Thomas, Washington, District of Columbia, August 3, 1841,—original in *Griswold Collection*, also in Harrison, vol. II, pages 95–99.

Washington, 3 *August*, 1841

My family, by the father's side, were among the early settlers of New England. Isaiah Thomas, the founder of the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester (Mass.), and the author of *The History of Printing*, was my father's uncle. . . . My Father, E. S. Thomas, . . . emigrated to Charleston, S. C., where he, after establishing himself in the book-business, met my mother, who was then on a visit from Baltimore, of which city she was

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[938] J. H. Whitty, *Memoir to the Complete Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* gives some additional data about F. W. Thomas and Poe.

(*a native*) . . . Shortly after the marriage of my father he removed from Charleston to Providence, Rhode Island, where I was born in, I think, the fall of 1808. I left Rhode Island a child in the nurse's arms and have never been back — so I hold myself to be a Southerner — as my parents returned to Charleston with me. (My family consists of myself, then Lewis, Frances, Susan, Mary, Martha, Belle and Calvin.) I was a delicate child, and, at the age of four, I fell from a furniture box on which I was playing, and injured my left leg. I went into the house crying, as a child would, and soon returned to play again. My limb, a few weeks afterwards, became very painful, my health gradually declined, and the physicians advised my parents to send me to a healthier climate. In charge of my aunt I was sent to Baltimore, and placed under the care of my aunt Foulke. There I grew robust and recovered from my lameness except an occasional weakness in my limb, when I over-exercised myself at play. When about eight or nine, in running to the window, over a wet floor, to look at the soldiers passing, I got a fall, which, after long confinement (a year or more), threw me, a skeleton, on crutches. I used them until five years since, when the contrivance I now use was suggested to me. I went to school very little in consequence of my lameness and frequent indisposition, and when I was seventeen I commenced the study of law. I have never been to college. The first attempt I made at scribbling was at this time. I wrote a poetical satire on some fops about town, and they became exasperated with the printer of the paper, I forget its name — a scurrilous penny-sheet — and tore his office to pieces, making Pi of his type. I attended at this time a debating society, which had a great many visitors, and there I used to hold forth with the rest. I was invited one Fourth of July to make a speech before the society on a steamboat excursion, and, getting some little credit for it I was invited by my political friends to address their meetings which I did, being then rated with Jacksonism. . . . Your brother and I were then intimate — and rather rivals in a love affair. Scott, my fellow student, studied hard, — I often stole out to the Baltimore Library and devoured the works upon Poetry, Oratory and Biography. Just after I was admitted to practice, my father, who had lost a handsome fortune, emigrated with his family, leaving myself, to Cincinnati and established the *Commercial Advertiser*. I practiced a few months, and then from ill health, retired to the country, where, after a year's sojourn, I emigrated to Cincinnati in 1832 and assisted my father in editing his paper. We soon differed upon political matters, and I commenced the practice of the law, but in bad health. I defended a great many criminals, I believe with some success, and lectured before the Lyceum. In descending the river I wrote several stanzas expressive of my feelings, which I published in my father's paper. They were noticed and complimented by the contemporary press, and I wrote out some farther impressions which the new scenes had made on me, and upon invitation delivered them before the Lyceum, in the shape of a rambling poem called *The Emigrant, or Reflections in Descending the Ohio*. This took, if I may so say, before the Lyceum and I was requested to publish it, which I did in 1833. . . .

After this, when Judge McLean was brought out for the Presidency, I was selected to publish his organ in Cincinnati, which I called the *Intel-*

ligencer. I had it for about six months, and was compelled to quit the editorial chair, in consequence of bad health. While confined to my house and bed, I remarked one day to my *sister Frances* that I felt like trying to write a novel. She insisted upon my doing it, and daily brought paper and pen to my bedside, where most of *Clinton Bradshaw* was written. I should have mentioned that my best friend in Cincinnati was Charles Hammond of the Cincinnati *Gazette,* who is now dead, but who was esteemed the best editor and lawyer in Ohio. To him I dedicated my *Emigrant,* and he defended me with true chivalry against all critical attacks. In his paper, too, I wrote many satires upon folks about town, which made me some enemies.

When I had finished *Clinton Bradshaw,* with letters of introduction in my pocket to Mathew Carey, from Mr. Hammond and General Harrison, I started for Philadelphia which I reached in the dusk of the evening. Unknown and unknowing, in bad health and worse spirits, I wandered on not knowing what to do with myself, and shall never forget stopping before a house in Chestnut Street struck with a tune that some fair one was playing, as if with a familiar voice. The discovery that the song was mine, *'Tis said that absence conquers love,* changed the whole current of my feelings.

Mr. Carey, (this was in 1835), introduced me to Carey, Lea & Co. and they undertook the publication of my work. Let me say that Mr. Carey treated me with the greatest kindness. He was lame too, but a philosopher, and he felt and expressed a real sympathy for me. I was frequently his guest, and he often came to see me. In proof of his benevolent character let me say that he often annoyed me, or rather provoked my sensitiveness, by sending some lame man or woman or other he had picked up in the street, to consult with me upon my superior powers of locomotion. Most of the characters in *Clinton Bradshaw* were drawn from persons living in Baltimore. 'Glassman' was meant for Charles Mitchell, a very distinguished lawyer, who was dissipated. 'Old Nancy' for old Nelly, who is still an apple woman in Baltimore. 'Cavendish' was drawn from a young, eccentric friend of mine, named Kelley, who is since dead. 'Shaffer' was a portraiture of Jennings, etc.

East and West was published in 1856. It was an attempt to portray the every day scenes of life occurring to a fallen family emigrating from the east to the west, most of the characters there were from life. *Howard Pinckney* was published in 1840. I have by me in MS. the poem which you have seen called — (I believe I will so call it) — *The Adventures of a Poet,* which consists of 1800 lines; and two volumes of sketches of such persons as Wirt, John Randolph, Simon Kenton, (the Last of the Pioneers), with tales, etc. . . .

In the May number of the *Southern Literary Messenger,* for 1838, you will find a sketch of your humble servant by Ingraham.

While writing my books I travelled through the west to Louisville, St. Louis, &c., and in the last canvass held forth in those places on the Harrison side. Sometimes upon invitation, in these cities and in Cincinnati, I delivered lectures upon literary subjects such as Oratory, Poetry, etc., Odd-Fellow addresses, and Fourth of July addresses. I was a delegate to the Baltimore May convention in '40, where I held forth, and after which I made your acquaintance in Philadelphia and got pelted by the people as you remember — or rather by the Locos.

I came on East last March to get my books out, but the death of General Harrison, and the uncertainties about the currency and the bank have prevented my publishing. Here I was invited to lecture before different societies, and in Alexandria, and did so to full houses, gratis — which were followed by empty puffs; but you know what Goldsmith says about the Muse —

> Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe
> That found me poor at first and keeps me so.

(Don't say of me that I am in office, as it is only a temporary appointment.)

I am now engaged in writing a novel upon the events of the present day, many of the scenes of which are laid in Washington. My object is to describe life in the varieties in which I have seen it in Missouri, New Orleans and here among the holders and seekers. I have written occasionally for these three or four years past for the *Knickerbocker, Graham's,* the *Ladies Companion* and the *Southern Literary Messenger.* . . .

One of the first persons who noticed me in the West was General Harrison, who shortly after my arrival in Cincinnati invited me to the Bend, where I went and was his guest for some weeks, — I was engaged there in one of my first law cases against his eldest son (now dead), William Harrison.

Note. The subsequent history of Thomas' association with Poe is narrated in the body of the text.

VII

Letters from the University of Virginia in 1826

THE following four items are here included by courtesy of the Edgar Allan Poe Shrine of Richmond, Virginia: They are:

One: A letter from Thomas Bolling, a classmate of Poe, to his mother from the University of Virginia dated April 1, 1825.

Two: A letter from Thomas Bolling from the University of Virginia to his father, Colonel William Bolling of Bolling Hall, dated May 10, 1826.

Three: A letter from Alen Garrett of Charlottesville, Virginia, a friend of the Bolling family and also known to Poe.

Four: A document signed by G. Thomas from the University of Virginia, to Colonel William Bolling for installments due.

Note — the first two letters are printed to show the relations between father and son in the Bolling family who lived close to the estate of John Allan, in Gouchland County. This family were personal friends of Poe and John Allan.

Letter *three* shows the manner in which the financial affairs, and the word of honor of a young scion of a Virginia planter's family were treated by his parents and friends.

Letter *four* shows Colonel Bolling not only sending his son to the University and paying his way, but also contributing to the " Educational Fund " for the University by subscription.

All of these items, it is thought, may tend to throw an interesting contemporary light on the indignation of Poe at his guardian's highly contrasted methods of procedure with his " son." Thomas Bolling is referred to in the text (*Originals in author's possession*).

ONE

April 1, 1825

MY DEAR MOTHER

Thinking it a duty incumbent on me to thank you for your very affectionate postscript, and the Dr. having concluded to tarry longer, I determined at least to write you, that the number of letters which I have written to my Father, will not reproach me, when I see you again which will not be untill December, unless you should repeat your trip this summer, which I am inclined to think will be very pleasing as I expect this will be a very long summer and you so seldome go from home, that when ever you do, the clouds seem to be drawn from every quarter of the Globe.

There are sixty students at present and are gradually increasing, the people around us seem to be trying to get in with us by exhibiting every imaginable attention. My father my getting a mattress which I should prefer but for one reason. That is if me and my room mate were to fall out, I should take another room, and then the bed would be far preferable, so I have only to request you to send it as soon as convenient, and indeed I had as leave, sleep in it in summer as not. As yet I have every necessary article and a plenty of paper but will thank you to send a *Horrice Delphini* which is in my press, my candles I hope you will not fail to send though I am not in immediate need of them, I think by sending my trunk and bed together, you might make a better bargain as to the price of convayance, You need not put yourself to any trouble about my violin as I am very little concerned and can get one here when ever I choose, and indeed I rather you should not, because they might bowrow it to serenade and might get it ruined, there are several of my Breme Students here among whom are Anderson whom I am very fond of, I forgot to credit my father for not having taken snuff and abuse him for not having practised on the Violin, and I hope you will not lay it by in the prime of your life one of you must write when my trunk comes and excuse these unconnected sentences. My love and sincere well wishes for you all and Believe me ever your affectionate Son

Thomas Bolling

P. S. I have begun this letter to my mother but have addressed myself principally to my father.

Farewell
your Son
Thos. Bolling

Thinking that it will be agreeable to my Father I enclose a copy of the Laws —

Two

University of Virginia *May 10th,* 1826

My ever dear Father.

I have both to acknowledge the receipt of your letter and the enclosure, both of which contributed greatly to my satisfaction, not only the pleasure of hearing that you were well, but many other things quite agreeable to my eye, one in particular that of your safe arrival home, and my dear Father I was glad to hear of your intended trip to Lynchburge for several reasons, especially at this time since I know that you will meet with our relation *Meade* whom I have been in company with for several nights at Mr. Garretts, and have to acknowledge much kind treatment from them to me, and what rendered my time still more agreeable, was to meet with Mistress Chattoria and the Miss Carry's and must inform you of a most agreeable trip I took with them to Retten's Mountain on Thursday last. On Wednesday evening I was invited to spend the evening at Mrs. Carr's, about 7 miles on the way which being performed left 15, which was a very agreeable distance to go and return the next and the view I can only say surpassed all conception. I possessed a pleasing melancholy, arising from my being able to see far below my dear home, without being able to forward my body with my sight, and to spare you my anxiety to perform the trip, I will attempt to describe my *noble Beast,* a *sorrell horse* 6 feet, string Halted in both hind legs, could neither *pace,* gallup or *trot,* and still he performed all, that is a confused higgledy, piggledy of the whole, and I never backed a more sure footed animal, which is the *sum* of his merits, and afforded more laughter, than anything we met with the whole day, and finally he has the exact character of the Horse that *Shakespeare* describes so admirably in one of his plays. I have some idea of buying him and trading for that colt you mentioned, as you mentioned it would be a difficult matter to *barter* you out of. I had a very pleasing dream last nit. that you and myself were hunting, I with my gun and pointer, and the conversation we carried on together was happiness *below*, and only regret it had not been in reality, I think at this time there is some probability of Mrs. Garretts going down next month if so it is more than probable I will accompany her as far as (B. H.) and was truly rejoiced that I de—— myself of that pleasure, which some of my comrades did, since I know that you would have been dissatisfied, for I have lived to the age to know that there is nothing in the bounds of reason that you will spare to gratify my wants and inclinations, and it would give me pleasure by way of a variety for you to refuse, for if I could call to mind any circumstance of my *past* life I could not recollect a single demand or request which has not been granted to me by you, and if you were to refuse now I could hardly think anything of it. I must now give you some information res our College affairs. We have lately lost a student by the name of Thomas Barclay, expelled for a very trivial offence, and suspended for the Session, and I Clarke whom Mr. Wessiger is acquainted for months, the latter particularly was the most inconsidered act I have known the Faculty to be guilty of, for he was considered a very studious fellow, inoffensive in every respect, and Nature was as liberal towards him in the way of sense, as most of people, and I am in hopes that his sentence will be reconsidered, and his punishment abolished. I would request of you to send my old hat by the first opportunity as my present one is declining fast, it was a very indifferent one. Cousin Meade gave me three books, and (*torn*) and 2 for Jane Rolf, which I am in hopes she will be able to read with fluency, and if so I will certainly procure her promised present. I have arrived at the part of Nat. Philosophy which is considered the most difficult part of the course, namely, Astronomy, and although I consider it quite difficult, I must acknowledge it more or less pleasant, and I sincerely trust that the next, may at least, be my last College year, and then I shall be able to enjoy the company of whose value, is the sole importance and consideration of this world to me, and in your next I must beg a *history* of your visit to Lynchburge and when my thirst for seeing you will be quenched, by a movement on one part or the other, though at present there is little probability of my visiting you, as I would be afraid during the warm month, and were I to put it off for the fall, then our vacation would be so near that it would scarcely be worth undertaking, and now I have arrived at the limits of my paper and having penned all the news I contain at present, I will bid you adieu, with love to all by assuring you of the unremitted attachment of one who professes and calls himself by the name of your affectionate Son

THOMAS BOLLING

THREE

Charlottesville 21*st*, *April* 1826

MY DEAR SIR

I avail myself of the first leasure moment I have had since my last letter to you to answer the remaining part of your favour of the 27th ult. I regret exceedingly, that Thomas should have thought it necessary, to mention to you the occurrence between him and myself in relation to the fifty dollars deposited with me the last summer, because it shows that he still doubts whether or not I was satisfied as to the correctness of his statement. I had hoped that all his fears on that score had been removed by me upon our second interview upon the subject, and that he was perfectly satisfied with the reasons I then gave him accounting for my seeming forgetfulness and hesitation at the moment of his application for the money. The truth is that the length of time which elapsed between the deposit and his application and that time having been occupied by such a variety and multiplicity of business always pressing upon me, the deposit had escaped my recollection, and my hesitation at the moment, while I was endeavoring to refresh my recollection, I presume struck Thomas as doubts with me as to the deposit, yet without further hesitation I furnished him the money. Afterwards in reflecting upon the subject, I was enabled to recollect something of the circumstances, and upon seeing Thomas I hoped I had removed all uneasiness with him on that score. Since the receipt of your letter, I have refrained from renewing the matter to him least I might not be able by assurances to remove entirely his doubts in regard to it, and must ask your aid in accomplishing their removal. I assure you that I am perfectly satisfied with the statement he made to me of the deposit, although at the moment of his application for the money, I confess it had escaped my recollection, and while with Thomas (young as he is) such forgetfulness would seem unaccountable, yet to you, who knows the effect which a constant pressure of public and private business has upon our frail memories, such forgetfulness is excusable, and therefore it is that I ask your friendly aid, for I assure you it would be a source of no little uneasiness to me, to believe that Thomas still doubts my sincerity in the assurances already given him upon this subject.

While it is admitted that the delay already taken place in our intended visit to you and family, would seem to authorize you to insist on 'no further continuances.' Yet circumstances not under our command, may in spite of our most anchious wishes, controls our movements, and as they have heretofore been found so unyielding, I cannot but still hope that should they continue their obstinacy, we shall still find with you further indulgence, should unavoidable circumstances render the asking of it on our part indispensably necessary, we however at present hope we shall find it in our power to redeem our promise some time in June next in the mean time we need not add any further assurances of the pleasure we should receive from a visit so long and so anchiously wished for on our part. My family are in their usual good health, all of whom join in offering to yourself and Mrs. Bolling renewed assurances of affectionate regard, & I beg leave to repeat to you the most friendly and respectful regards with which

I remain
Yours most sincerely
Alen Garrett

P. S. Thomas was with us two days ago. he is quite well.

FOUR

MR. WILLIAM BOLLING

In Account with UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

1818	April 1st	To Installment due this day		$ 25.00
1819	April 1st	" " " " "		25.00
1820	April 1st	" " " " "		25.00
1821	April 1st	" " " " "		25.00
				$100.00
		CR.		
1818	March 23	By deposit in Bank of Va.	$25.00	
1819	Sept. 30	" ditto	25.00	
1820	Oct. 24	" ditto	25.00	75.00
		Balance due		$ 25.00

Charlottesville, Oct. 21, 1822

DEAR SIR

The Tuitors of the University having lately appointed me to Collect the balances due on Subscriptions: I take the liberty of making a statement of Your Acct. which you will Perceive above amounting to the sum of Twenty-Five Dollars, and ask the favor of you, either to transmit to me by mail to this Place or deposit in the Bank of Va. Richmond to the Credit of the Bursar of the University the amt. As the Legislature will shortly meet it will afford a safe opportunity to forward the money by one of your representatives to be deposited in Bank as above. This course is desirable as it will save me the trouble and the University the expense of my waiting on you in Person.

Yrs. Respy.
G. THOMAS

Dec. 21, 1822 Then received of Col. Wm. Bolling Twenty-five Dollars on acct. of the above.

G. THOMAS
Colr.

VIII

TWO letters by Mrs. Maria Clemm (" Muddie "), Poe's aunt and mother-in-law are here printed from the originals by the courtesy of James F. Drake, Esq., of New York City.

One — Written by Mrs. Clemm from the house of Mrs. Annie Richmond at Lowell, Massachusetts, on April 11, 1850, a few months after Poe's death concerning the copyright on Poe's *Collected Works* that Griswold had in possession to her undoing. The letter is to John Neal at Portland, Maine.

Two — This letter from Mrs. Clemm, written from the Church Home in Baltimore, on October 6, 1865, shows the pitiable state of her crippled hands, by the deranged script. It is written to Gabriel Harrison of New York, then at work on his portrait of Poe, and evidently in reply to a letter of his, written to her, asking for information as to the personal appearance of Poe as data for his portrait, based upon memory and a daguerreotype (last supplementary letter of Harrison to Mrs. Clemm to that of January 31, 1865, — see J. A. Harrison, vol. II, page 433–434).

ONE

Lowell, *April 11th* 1850

DEAR SIR

Will you pardon me for again intruding on your time, but the kindness you have evinced for me in your kind letters encourages me to do so. I have had a letter from New York, in which I have been asked if I would say what I would take for the copyright of my dear Eddie's works, but at the same time requested not to mention to any of my friends that they have passed out of my hands. Do you think this would be right? Will you have the kindness to advise me how to act? I have written Mr. Willis on the subject, and will be entirely guided by his and your advice. I am told the work is selling very well, but have heard nothing from the publisher concerning it. I received the paper with your kind notice, and thank you most sincerely. Will Graham think you publish the other that you mentioned having written?

God bless you dear Mr. Neal, and believe me to be your grateful and sincere friend.

MARIA CLEMM

TWO

(*To Gabriel Harrison*)

Baltimore *Oct.* 6, '65

MY DEAR FRIEND

I have just received your most welcome letter for it has been so very long since I have heard from you. I am better again, and as soon as I am able I will comply with request, now I can scarcely write these few lines. No, I have not heard from Mr. Lewis or the press either. God help any poor soul that is obliged to ask a favor, altho I am just going to ask one of you, but I feel so sure if it is in your power you will grant it I want $5 or even *three* more than I ever did in my whole life, cannot you procure it for me somehow, oh if you could only know how much I am in need of it, you would try to send it to me, if possible write by *return* of mail. I am very sad to day for tomorrow is the anniversary of my darling Eddie's death. please excuse this peice of paper I have no other and have not the means of getting it I am ever your true friend

"MUDDIE"
(*Maria Clemm*)

Dr. J. J. Moran Items

The following letter from Dr. J. J. Moran who attended Poe on his death-bed in Baltimore, on October 7, 1849, is of interest as recording an interview with Mrs. A. B. Shelton (Elmira Royster), thirty-three years after Poe's death. *If* the Doctor can be believed, Mrs. Shelton was still able to weep for Poe. This is quite possible, of course.

The point is here, however, that Dr. Moran was on one of his lecture trips in which he went about the country telling about the death of Poe. At every recital the "demise of our great poet" became more edifying. At this particular stage, a really beautiful and touching climax had been achieved. A comparison of this letter with the one which Dr. Moran wrote to Mrs. Clemm on November 15, 1849, provides an insight into the growth of a certain kind of Poe legend.

Falls Church *Va Febry* 27, 1882

MR. EDWARD ABBOTT

DEAR SIR

Yours recd. did not reach me until I had returned from a lecture tour to Richmond, the home of his *Annabel Lee,* who yet lives, is near her three score and ten. Yet she was at the lecture, 32 years have intervened since his death, and she and I, met for the first time after that period, it was a meeting I shall never forget — so deeply were we impressed, that our tears could not be restrained — but to the question asked in reference to the slip of paper sent, I answer, it is correct in the main or chief part. The word rode, should be arched — his decrees legibly &c. he was in my hands 16 hours, and 15 out the 16, was rational and perfectly conscious — I have some hope of getting Boston soon to deliver my lecture have been written to for that purpose — have also a letter from G. W. Childs of Ph*a* In haste as I have a great number of letters to answer

I remain yours
Respectfully —
J. J. MORAN —

(*Courtesy of James F. Drake, Esq.*)

(Report of one of Dr. Moran's Garbled Lectures about Poe's death)

Dr. J. J. Moran, of Falls Church, Va., who was with Edgar Allan Poe in his dying hours, in a recent lecture said that the slander had been reiterated that Poe died while under the influence of liquor, and nothing could be further from the fact. Upon his arrival at the hospital the doctor questioned the hackman who brought him there, and he declared that Poe was not drunk, nor was there the smell of liquor about him when he lifted him into his vehicle. As Poe's last hour approached, Dr. Moran said that he bent over him and asked if he had any word he wished communicated to his friends. Poe raised his fading eyes and answered 'Nevermore.' In a few moments he turned uneasily and moaned, 'Oh God, is there no ransom for the deathless spirit?' Continuing he said: 'He who rode the heavens and upholds the universe has His decrees written on the frontlet of every human being.' Then followed murmuring, growing fainter and fainter, then a tremor of the limbs, a faint sigh, 'and the spirit of Edgar Allan Poe had passed the boundary line that divides time from eternity.'
(*Courtesy of James F. Drake, Esq.,*)

IX

THE brief glimpse of Poe and John Neal, in the letters printed below, gives a rather amusing sidelight on both " Quarles " and " Jehu O'Cataract," *i.e.*, Poe and John Neal. Neal gave Poe his first public notice in the *Yankee* in 1829 in the squib about *Al Aaraaf*, which, although helpful, was pedantically patronizing in its corrections of Poe's verbiage and metrics. Neal had lately been residing in Baltimore, knew the Poes, and looked upon Edgar as a little poetaster to be helped for old friends' sake, but also to be patted on the shoulder with the admonitary air of a great editor. Young Poe, on his part, already regarded himself as a poet and a critic, and had his own opinion about Mr. John Neal. On July 28, 1829 he writes to Carey, Lea & Carey from Baltimore:

> . . . notwithstanding the assertions of Mr. John Neal to the contrary, who now and then hitting thro' sheer impudence upon a correct judgement in matters of authorship, is most unenviably rediculous whenever he touches the fine arts —

Thus Poe had the *first* word, only meant for the private eye of Mr. Lea. Poe cannot be accused of ungratitude to Neal who, not until two months later, was patting him on the back and then giving him a little kick. See page 168 of the September, 1829, *Yankee*, followed in December by four pages more (295–298) in which the patting was more pronounced, and the kicks reduced to three minor ones from footnotes.

Eleven years later the following letters were exchanged, disclosing both still at the same game, *i.e.*, Poe striving to further his own reputation; John Neal correcting Poe's grammar with all the patronizing attitude of the New Englander, " alarmed *at a style that is beginning to prevail at the South.*"

Poe was attempting to get the *Penn* (magazine) launched in Philadelphia, and wrote to Neal asking his influence.

Philadelphia, *June 4th*, 1840

MY DEAR SIR: As you gave me the first jog in my literary career, you are in a measure bound to protect me and keep me rolling. I therefore now ask you to aid me with your influence in whatever manner your experience shall suggest.

It strikes me that I never write you except to ask a favor. But my friend Thomas will assure you that I bear you always in mind, holding you in the highest respect and esteem.

Most truly yours,
EDGAR A. POE

To which he received this characteristic reply, collect postage:

Portland, *June* 8, '40

My dear Sir: Yours of June 4, directed to New York, reached me but yesterday. I am glad to hear of your new enterprise and hope it may be all that you desire; but I cannot help you. I have done with the newspapers — have abandoned the journals — and have involved so many of my friends of late by becoming editor, or associate editor of so many different things for a few months at a time — and always against my will — that I haven't the face to ask any person to subscribe for anything on earth.

But, as I have said before, I wish you success, and to prove it, allow me to caution you against a style, which I observe, to my great alarm, is beginning to prevail at the South. You say 'I will be pardoned' for 'I shall be pardoned.' For assurance that 'I will fulfill,' &c., for 'shall,' &c. Are you Irish — the well-educated Irish I mean? They always make this mistake, and the Scotch, too, sometimes; and you, I am persuaded, are either connected by blood or habits with the Irish of the South. Forgive me this liberty, I pray you, and take it for granted that I should not complain of these two little errors if I could find anything else to complain of.

Yours truly,
John Neal

These letters were published in the *New York Times Book Review* for June 17, 1917, under the title of *Poe and John Neal* by Edwin B. Hill. The Poe letter is to be found on page 256 of Neal's *Wandering Recollections of a Somewhat Busy Life*. The letter is incomplete.

Neal's letter to Poe (folded sheet) is addressed to "Mr. Edgar A. Poe, Philadelphia, Pa.," and in Poe's hand is the filing endorsement, "John Neal, June 8, 1840." In 1917 it was in the possession of Mr. E. B. Hill.

(*Courtesy of the* New York Times, Inc.)

The following reprint abridged from a review of Poe's tragedy of *Politian*, edited by Thomas Ollive Mabbott, and first published in 1923, *Richmond, The Edgar Allan Poe Shrine*, is here given as showing how Poe used contemporary material in his work. The review by H. I. Brock appeared in the *New York Times' Book Review* for November 11, 1923.

. . . Notes in Mr. Mabbott's edition serve to recall enough of the details of a story which in 1825 — ten years before Poe made literary use of it — set the tongues of the country wagging as eagerly as more recently they wagged over the murder case of Mrs. Hall. Newspapers were not what they are now, but this story enjoyed a considerable publicity in print. And Poe whose first published poem, *Tamerlane,* saw the light in 1827, had ready to his pen a rich scenario.

Briefly, a certain Colonel Solomon P. Sharp had done grievous injury to a lady of good family, Miss Ann Cook. In her shamed seclusion she was wooed by another Kentuckian, Jereboam O. Beauchamp, a young lawyer. The lady consented to marry this new and ardent admirer only upon condition that before the wedding day he should kill the man who had wronged her.

The enamored Beauchamp agreed and promptly, after the approved manner of the time and country, challenged Sharp to fight a duel. Both were buried in one grave at Bloomfield, Ky.

Such is the story, grim and bloodstained enough to satisfy even Poe's insatiate fancy for the sombre. Tricked out with Italian names, titles, scenery, accessories of princely state, the story of *Politian* is the same. A Duke's son betrays the lady Lalage, his father's lovely ward, and by his ducal father is betrothed to a highborn lady, his kinswoman. The forsaken one despairs and vows vengeance on a dagger. Then comes to Rome from far-away Britain, Politian, Earl of Leicester, and falls a victim to those so lately despised charms. He woos lorn Lalage in a moonlit garden — which is familiar Poe enough. 'A deed is to be done,' she says, and the Earl goes forth to slay the Count — Count Castiglione. The Count enacts the part of Colonel Sharp of Kentucky to the life and the letter. Politian, balked, borrows procrastination and irresolution from Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. The last written act of the play shows him soliloquizing in the Coliseum — Poe made a separate poem of that soliloquy which is very well known indeed. The lady Lalage comes to him there, and on her reminder that her seducer stands at that moment with his bride on the very steps of the altar, Politian departs with evident bloody intent.

Only so far Poe got. Of exactly how he would have concluded the play there is, so far as Mr. Mabbott's careful inquiries show, no record. . . .

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